

# LETTERS OF MARK TWAIN



MARK TWAIN

[*Frontispiece*]



LETTERS OF  
**MARK TWAIN**

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
AND COMMENTARY

BY

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LONDON  
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## NOTE

THIS selection of letters has been made from the American edition of 1917. In order to read with the text, the commentary has been, where necessary, abridged.



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# MARK TWAIN

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, for nearly half a century known and celebrated as "Mark Twain," was born in Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835. He was one of the foremost American philosophers of his day; he was the world's most famous humorist of any day. During the later years of his life he ranked not only as America's chief man of letters, but likewise as her best known and best loved citizen.

The beginnings of that life were sufficiently unpromising. The family was a good one, of old Virginia and Kentucky stock, but its circumstances were reduced, its environment meagre and disheartening. The father, John Marshall Clemens—a lawyer by profession, a merchant by vocation—had brought his household to Florida from Jamestown, Tennessee, somewhat after the manner of Judge Hawkins as pictured in *The Gilded Age*. Florida was a small town then, a mere village of twenty-one houses located on Salt River, but Judge Clemens, as he was usually called, optimistic and speculative in his temperament, believed in its future. Salt River would be made navigable; Florida would become a metropolis. He established a small business there, and located his family in the humble frame cottage where, five months later, was born a baby boy to whom they gave the name of Samuel—a family name—and added Langhorne, after an old Virginia friend of his father.

The child was puny, and did not make a very sturdy

fight for life. Still he weathered along, season after season, and survived two stronger children, Margaret and Benjamin. By 1839 Judge Clemens had lost faith in Florida. He removed his family to Hannibal, and in this Mississippi River town the little lad whom the world was to know as Mark Twain spent his early life. In *Tom Sawyer* we have a picture of the Hannibal of those days and the atmosphere of his boyhood there.

His schooling was brief and of a desultory kind. It ended one day in 1847, when his father died and it became necessary that each one should help somewhat in the domestic crisis. His brother Orion, ten years his senior, was already a printer by trade. Pamela, his sister, also considerably older, had acquired music, and now took a few pupils. The little boy Sam, at twelve, was apprenticed to a printer named Ament. His wages consisted of his board and clothes—"more board than clothes," as he once remarked to the writer.

He remained with Ament until his brother Orion brought out a small paper in Hannibal in 1850. The paper, in time, was moved into a part of the Clemens home, and the two brothers ran it, the younger setting most of the type. A still younger brother, Henry, entered the office as an apprentice. The *Hannibal Journal* was no great paper from the beginning, and it did not improve with time. Still, it managed to survive—country papers nearly always manage to survive—year after year, bringing in some sort of return. It was on this paper that young Sam Clemens began his writings—burlesque, as a rule, of local characters and conditions—usually published in his brother's absence; generally resulting in trouble on his return. Yet they made the paper sell, and if Orion had but realized his brother's talent he might have turned it into capital even then.

In 1853 (he was not yet eighteen) Sam Clemens grew tired of his limitations and pined for the wider horizon of the world. He gave out to his family that he was



going to St. Louis, but he kept on to New York, where a World's Fair was then going on. In New York he found employment at his trade, and during the hot months of 1853 worked in a printing-office in Cliff Street. By and by he went to Philadelphia, where he worked a brief time; made a trip to Washington, and presently set out for the West again, after an absence of more than a year.

Orion, meanwhile, had established himself at Muscatine, Iowa, but soon after removed to Keokuk, where the brothers were once more together, still following their trade. Young Sam Clemens remained in Keokuk until the winter of 1856-57, when he caught a touch of the South-American fever then prevalent, and decided to go to Brazil. He left Keokuk for Cincinnati, worked that winter in a printing-office there, and in April took the little steamer, *Paul Jones*, for New Orleans, where he expected to find a South-American vessel. In *Life on the Mississippi* we have his story of how he met Horace Bixby and decided to become a pilot instead of a South-American adventurer—jauntily setting himself the stupendous task of learning the twelve hundred miles of the Mississippi River between St. Louis and New Orleans—of knowing it as exactly and as unfailingly, even in the dark, as one knows the way to his own features. It seems incredible to those who knew Mark Twain in his later years—dreamy, unpractical, and indifferent to details—that he could have acquired so vast a store of minute facts as were required by that task. Yet within eighteen months he had become not only a pilot, but one of the best and most careful pilots on the river, entrusted with some of the largest and most valuable steamers. He continued in that profession for two and a half years longer, and during that time met with no disaster that cost his owners a single dollar for damage.

Then the war broke out. South Carolina seceded in December, 1860, and other States followed. Clemens was

in New Orleans in January, 1861, when Louisiana seceded, and his boat was put into the Confederate service and sent up the Red River. His occupation gone, he took steamer for the North—the last one before the blockade closed. A blank cartridge was fired at them from Jefferson Barracks when they reached St. Louis, but they did not understand the signal, and kept on. Presently a shell carried away part of the pilot-house and considerably disturbed its inmates. They realized, then, that war had really begun.

In those days Clemens' sympathies were with the South. He hurried up to Hannibal and enlisted with a company of young fellows who were recruiting with the avowed purpose of "throwing off the yoke of the invader." They were ready for the field, presently, and set out in good order, a sort of nondescript cavalry detachment, mounted on animals more picturesque than beautiful. Still, it was a resolute band, and might have done very well, only it rained a good deal, which made soldiering disagreeable and hard. Lieutenant Clemens resigned at the end of two weeks, and decided to go to Nevada with Orion, who was a Union abolitionist and had received an appointment from Lincoln as Secretary of the new Territory.

In *Roughing It* Mark Twain gives us the story of the overland journey made by the two brothers, and a picture of experiences at the other end—true in aspect, even if here and there elaborated in detail. He was Orion's private secretary, but there was no private-secretary work to do, and no salary attached to the position. The incumbent presently went to mining, adding that to his other trades.

He became a professional miner, but not a rich one. He was at Aurora, California, in the Esmeralda district, skimping along, with not much to eat and less to wear, when he was summoned by Joe Goodman, owner and editor of the Virginia City *Enterprise*, to come up and

take the local editorship of that paper. He had been contributing sketches to it now and then, under the pen-name of “Josh,” and Goodman, a man of fine literary instincts, recognized a talent full of possibilities. This was in the late summer of 1862. Clemens walked one hundred and thirty miles over very bad roads to take the job, and arrived way-worn and travel-stained. He began on a salary of twenty-five dollars a week, picking up news items here and there, and contributing occasional sketches—burlesques, hoaxes, and the like. When the Legislature convened at Carson City he was sent down to report it, and then, for the first time, began signing his articles “Mark Twain,” a river term, used in making soundings, recalled from his piloting days. The name presently became known up and down the Pacific coast. His articles were copied and commented upon. He was recognized as one of the foremost among a little coterie of overland writers, two of whom, Mark Twain and Bret Harte, were soon to acquire a world-wide fame.

He left Carson City one day, after becoming involved in a duel, the result of an editorial squib written in Goodman’s absence, and went across the Sierras to San Francisco. The duel turned out farcically enough, but the Nevada law, which regarded even a challenge or its acceptance as a felony, was an inducement to his departure. Furthermore, he had already aspired to a wider field of literary effort. He attached himself to the *Morning Call*, and wrote occasionally for one or two literary papers—the *Golden Era* and the *Californian*—prospering well enough during the better part of the year. Bret Harte and the rest of the little Pacific-slope group were also on the staff of these papers, and for a time, at least, the new school of American humour mustered in San Francisco.

The connection with the *Call* was not congenial. In due course it came to a natural end, and Mark Twain arranged to do a daily San Francisco letter for his old

paper, the *Enterprise*. The *Enterprise* letters stirred up trouble. They criticized the police of San Francisco so severely that the officials found means of making the writer's life there difficult and comfortless. With Jim Gillis, brother of a printer of whom he was fond, and who had been the indirect cause of his troubles, he went up into Calaveras Country, to a cabin on Jackass Hill. Jim Gillis, a lovable, picturesque character (the Truthful James of Bret Harte), owned mining claims. Mark Twain decided to spend his vacation in pocket-mining, and soon added that science to his store of knowledge. It was a halcyon, happy three months that he lingered there, but did not make his fortune; he only laid the corner-stone.

They tried their fortune at Angel's Camp, a place well known to readers of Bret Harte. But it rained pretty steadily, and they put in most of their time huddled around the single stove of the dingy hotel of Angel's, telling yarns. Among the stories was one told by a dreary narrator named Ben Coon. It was about a frog that had been tramed to jump, but failed to win a wager because the owner of a rival frog had surreptitiously loaded him with shot. The story had been circulated among the camps, but Mark Twain had never heard it until then. The tale and the tiresome fashion of its telling amused him. He made notes to remember it.

Their stay in Angel's Camp came presently to an end. One day, when the mining partners were following the specks of gold that led to a pocket somewhere up the hill, a chill, dreary rain set in. Jim, as usual, was washing, and Clemens was carrying water. The "colour" became better and better as they ascended, and Gillis, possessed with the mining passion, would have gone on, regardless of the rain. Clemens, however, protested, and declared that each pail of water was his last. Finally he said, in his deliberate drawl:

"Jim, I won't carry any more water. This work is too

disagreeable. Let's go to the house and wait till it clears up.”

Gillis had just taken out a pan of earth. “Bring one more pail, Sam,” he pleaded.

“I won't do it, Jim! Not a drop! Not if I knew there was a million dollars in that pan!”

They left the pan standing there and went back to Angel's Camp. The rain continued and they returned to Jackass Hill without visiting their claim again. Meantime the rain had washed away the top of the pan of earth left standing on the slope above Angel's, and exposed a handful of nuggets—pure gold. Two strangers came along and, observing it, sat down to wait until the thirty-day claim-notice posted by Jim Gillis should expire. They did not mind the rain—not with that gold in sight—and the minute the thirty days were up they followed the lead a few pans further, and took out—some say ten, some say twenty, thousand dollars. It was a good pocket. Mark Twain missed it by one pail of water. Still, it is just as well, perhaps, when one remembers *The Jumping Frog*.

Matters having quieted down in San Francisco, he returned and took up his work again. Artemus Ward, whom he had met in Virginia City, wrote him for something to use in his (Ward's) new book. Clemens sent the frog story, but he had been dilatory in preparing it, and when it reached New York, Carleton, the publisher, had Ward's book about ready for the press. It did not seem worth while to Carleton to include the frog story, and he handed it over to Henry Clapp, editor of the *Saturday Press*—a perishing sheet—saying:

“Here, Clapp, here's something you can use.”

The story appeared in the *Saturday Press* of November 18, 1865. According to the accounts of that time it set all New York in a roar, which annoyed, rather than gratified, its author. He had thought very little of it, indeed, yet had been wondering why some of his

more highly regarded work had not found fuller recognition.

But *The Jumping Frog* did not die. Papers printed it and reprinted it, and it was translated into foreign tongues. The name of "Mark Twain" became known as the author of that sketch, and the two were permanently associated from the day of its publication.

Such fame as it brought did not yield heavy financial return. Its author continued to win a more or less precarious livelihood doing miscellaneous work, until March, 1866, when he was employed by the *Sacramento Union*, to contribute a series of letters from the Sandwich Islands. They were notable letters, widely read and freely copied, and the sojourn there was a generally fortunate one. It was during his stay in the islands that the survivors of the wrecked vessel, the *Hornet*, came in, after long privation at sea. Clemens was sick at the time, but Anson Burlingame, who was in Honolulu, on the way to China, had him carried in a cot to the hospital, where he could interview the surviving sailors and take down their story. It proved a great "beat" for the *Union*, and added considerably to its author's prestige. On his return to San Francisco he contributed an article on the *Hornet* disaster to *Harper's Magazine*, and looked forward to its publication as a beginning of a real career. But, alas! when it appeared the printer and the proof-reader had somehow converted "Mark Twain" into "Mark Swan," and his dreams perished.

Undecided as to his plans, he was one day advised by a friend to deliver a lecture. He was already known as an entertaining talker, and his adviser judged his possibilities well. In *Roughing It* we find the story of that first lecture and its success. He followed it with other lectures up and down the Coast. He had added one more profession to his intellectual stock-in-trade.

Mark Twain, now provided with money, decided to pay a visit to his people. He set out for the East in

December, 1866, *viâ* Panama, arriving in New York in January. A few days later he was with his mother, then living with his sister, in St. Louis. A little later he lectured in Keokuk, and in Hannibal, his old home.

It was about this time that the first great Mediterranean steamship excursion began to be exploited. No such ocean picnic had ever been planned before, and it created a good deal of interest East and West. Mark Twain heard of it and wanted to go. He wrote to friends on the *Alta-California*, of San Francisco, and the publishers of that paper had sufficient faith to advance the money for his passage, on the understanding that he was to contribute frequent letters, at twenty dollars apiece. It was a liberal offer, as rates went in those days, and a godsend in the fullest sense of the word to Mark Twain.

Clemens now hurried to New York in order to be there in good season for the sailing date, which was in June. In New York he met Frank Fuller, whom he had known as territorial Governor of Utah, an energetic and enthusiastic admirer of the Western humorist. Fuller immediately proposed that Clemens give a lecture in order to establish his reputation on the Atlantic coast. Clemens demurred, but Fuller insisted, and engaged Cooper Union for the occasion. Not many tickets were sold. Fuller, however, always ready for an emergency, sent out a flood of complimentaries to the school teachers of New York and adjacent territory, and the house was crammed. It turned out to be a notable event. Mark Twain was at his best that night; the audience laughed until, as some of them declared when the lecture was over, they were too weak to leave their seats. His success as a lecturer was assured.

The *Quaker City* was the steamer selected for the great Oriental tour. It sailed as advertised, June 8, 1867, and was absent five months, during which Mark Twain contributed regularly to the *Alta-California*, and wrote several letters for the New York *Tribune*. They were read and copied everywhere. They preached a new gospel in

travel literature—a gospel of seeing with an overflowing honesty; a gospel of sincerity in according praise to whatever he considered genuine, and ridicule to the things believed to be shams. It was a gospel that Mark Twain continued to preach during his whole career. It became, in fact, his chief literary message to the world, a world ready for that message.

He returned to find himself famous. Publishers were ready with plans for collecting the letters in book form. The American Publishing Company, of Hartford, proposed a volume, elaborately illustrated, to be sold by subscription. He agreed with them as to terms, and went to Washington to prepare copy. But he could not work quietly there, and presently was back in San Francisco, putting his book together, lecturing occasionally, always to crowded houses. He returned in August, 1868, with the manuscript of the *Innocents Abroad*, and that winter, while his book was being manufactured, lectured throughout the East and Middle West, making his headquarters in Hartford, and in Elmira, New York.

He had an especial reason for going to Elmira. On the *Quaker City* he had met a young man by the name of Charles Langdon, and one day, in the Bay of Smyrna, had seen a miniature of the boy's sister, Olivia Langdon, then a girl of about twenty-two. He fell in love with that picture, and still more deeply in love with the original when he met her in New York on his return. The Langdon home was in Elmira, and it was for this reason that as time passed he frequently sojourned there. When the proofs of the *Innocents Abroad* were sent him he took them along, and he and sweet "Livy" Langdon read them together. What he lacked in those days in literary delicacy she detected, and together they pruned it away. She became his editor that winter—a position which she held until her death.

The book was published in July, 1869, and its success was immediate and abundant. On his wedding-day,



February 2, 1870, Clemens received a cheque from his publishers for more than four thousand dollars, royalty accumulated during the three months preceding. The sales soon amounted to more than fifty thousand copies, and had increased to very nearly one hundred thousand at the end of the first three years. It was a book of travel, its lowest price three dollars and fifty cents. Even with our increased reading population no such sale is found for a book of that description to-day. And the *Innocents Abroad* holds its place—still outsells every other book in its particular field.

Mark Twain now decided to settle down. He had bought an interest in the *Express*, of Buffalo, New York, and took up his residence in that city in a house presented to the young couple by Mr. Langdon. It did not prove a fortunate beginning. Sickness, death, and trouble of many kinds put a blight on the happiness of their first married year and gave them a distaste for the home in which they had made such a promising start. A baby boy, Langdon Clemens, came along in November, but he was never a strong child. By the end of the following year the Clemenses had arranged for a residence in Hartford, temporary at first, later made permanent. It was in Hartford that little Langdon died, in 1872.

Clemens, meanwhile, had sold out his interest in the *Express*, severed his connection with the *Galaxy*, a magazine for which he was doing a department each month, and had written a second book for the American Publishing Company, *Roughing It*, published in 1872. In August of the same year he made a trip to London, to get material for a book on England, but was too much sought after, too continuously fêted, to do any work. He went alone, but in November returned with the purpose of taking Mrs. Clemens and the new baby, Susy, to England the following spring. They sailed in April, 1873, and spent a good portion of the year in England and Scotland. They returned to America in November, and Clemens hurried

back to London alone to deliver a notable series of lectures under the management of George Dolby, formerly managing agent for Charles Dickens. For two months Mark Twain lectured steadily to London audiences—the big Hanover Square rooms always filled. He returned to his family in January, 1874.

Meantime, a home was being built for them in Hartford, and in the autumn of 1874 they took up residence in it—a happy residence, continued through seventeen years—well-nigh perfect years. Their summers they spent in Elmira, on Quarry Farm—a beautiful hilltop, the home of Mrs. Clemens's sister. It was in Elmira that much of Mark Twain's literary work was done. He had a special study there, some distance from the house, where he loved to work out his fancies and put them into visible form.

It was not so easy to work at Hartford; there was too much going on. The Clemens home was a sort of general headquarters for literary folk, near and far, and for distinguished foreign visitors of every sort. Howells and Aldrich used it as their half-way station between Boston and New York, and every foreign notable who visited America made a pilgrimage to Hartford to see Mark Twain. Some even went as far as Elmira, among them Rudyard Kipling, who recorded his visit in a chapter of his *American Notes*. Kipling declared he had come all the way from India to see Mark Twain.

Hartford had its own literary group. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe lived near the Clemens home; also Charles Dudley Warner. The Clemens and Warner families were constantly associated, and *The Gilded Age*, published in 1873, resulted from the friendship of Warner and Mark Twain. The character of Colonel Sellers in that book has become immortal, and it is a character that only Mark Twain could create, for, though drawn from his mother's cousin, James Lampton, it embodies—and in no very exaggerated degree—characteristics that were his own. The tendency to make millions was always imminent;

temptation was always hard to resist. Money-making schemes are continually being placed before men of means and prominence, and Mark Twain, to the day of his death, found such schemes fatally attractive.

It was because of the Sellers characteristics in him that he invested in a typesetting-machine which cost him nearly two hundred thousand dollars and helped to wreck his fortunes by and by. It was because of this characteristic that he invested in numberless schemes of lesser importance, but no less disastrous in the end. His one successful commercial venture was his association with Charles L. Webster in the publication of the *Grant Memoirs*, of which enough copies were sold to pay a royalty of more than four hundred thousand dollars to Grant's widow—the largest royalty ever paid from any single publication. It saved the Grant family from poverty. Yet even this triumph was a misfortune to Mark Twain, for it led to scores of less profitable book ventures and eventual disaster.

Meanwhile he had written and published a number of books. *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* were among the volumes that had entertained the world and inspired it with admiration and love for their author. In 1878-79 he had taken his family to Europe, where they spent their time in travelling over the Continent. It was during this period that he was joined by his intimate friend, the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell, of Hartford, and the two made a journey, the story of which is told in *A Tramp Abroad*.

In 1891 the Hartford house was again closed, this time indefinitely, and the family, now five in number, took up residence in Berlin. The typesetting-machine and the unfortunate publishing venture were drawing heavily on the family finances at this period, and the cost of the Hartford establishment was too great to be maintained. During the next three years he was distracted by the

financial struggle which ended in April, 1894, with the failure of Charles L. Webster & Co. Mark Twain now found himself bankrupt, and nearly one hundred thousand dollars in debt. It had been a losing fight, with this bitter ending always in view; yet during this period of hard, hopeless effort he had written a large portion of the book which of all his works will perhaps survive the longest—his tender and beautiful story of Joan of Arc. All his life Joan had been his favourite character in the world's history, and during those trying months and years of the early 'nineties—in Berlin, in Florence, in Paris—he was conceiving and putting his picture of that gentle girl-warrior into perfect literary form. It was published in *Harper's Magazine*—anonymously, because, as he said, it would not have been received seriously had it appeared over his own name. The authorship was presently recognized. Exquisitely, reverently, as the story was told, it had in it the touch of quaint and gentle humour which could only have been given to it by Mark Twain.

It was only now and then that Mark Twain lectured during these years. He had made a reading tour with George W. Cable during the winter of 1884–85, but he abominated the platform, and often vowed he would never appear before an audience again. Yet, in 1895, when he was sixty years old, he decided to rebuild his fortunes by making a reading tour around the world. It was not required of him to pay his debts in full. The creditors were willing to accept fifty per cent. of the liabilities, and had agreed to a settlement on that basis. But this did not satisfy Mrs. Clemens, and it did not satisfy him. They decided to pay dollar for dollar. They sailed for America, and in July, 1895, set out from Elmira on the long trail across land and sea. Mrs. Clemens and Clara Clemens joined this pilgrimage, Susy and Jean Clemens remaining at Elmira with their aunt. Looking out of the car windows, the travellers saw Susy waving them an adieu. It was a picture they would long remember.

The reading tour was one of triumph. High prices and crowded houses prevailed everywhere. The author-reader visited Australia, New Zealand, India, Ceylon, South Africa, arriving in England, at last, with the money and material which would pay off the heavy burden of debt and make him once more free before the world. And in that hour of triumph came the heavy blow. Susy Clemens, never very strong, had been struck down. The first cable announced her illness. The mother and Clara sailed at once. Before they were half-way across the ocean a second cable announced that Susy was dead. The father had to meet and endure the heartbreak alone; he could not reach America in time for the burial. He remained in England, and was joined there by the sorrowing family.

They passed that winter in London, where he worked at the story of his travels, *Following the Equator*, the proofs of which he read the next summer in Switzerland. The returns from it, and from his reading venture, wiped away Mark Twain's indebtedness and made him free. He could go back to America, as he said, able to look any man in the face again.

Yet he did not go immediately. He could live more economically abroad, and economy was still necessary. The family spent two winters in Vienna, and their apartments there constituted a veritable court where the world's notables gathered. Another winter in England followed, and then, in the latter part of 1900, they went home—that is, to America. Mrs. Clemens never could bring herself to return to Hartford, and never saw their home there again.

Mark Twain's return to America was in the nature of a national event. Wherever he appeared throngs turned out to bid him welcome. Mighty banquets were planned in his honour.

In a house at 14, West Tenth Street, and in a beautiful place at Riverdale, on the Hudson, most of the next three

years were passed. Then Mrs. Clemens's health failed, and in the autumn of 1903 the family went to Florence for her benefit. There, on the 5th of June, 1904, she died. They brought her back and laid her beside Susy, at Elmira. That winter the family took up residence at 21, Fifth Avenue, New York, and remained there until the completion of Stormfield, at Redding, Connecticut, in 1908.

In his later life Mark Twain was accorded high academic honours. Already, in 1888, he had received from Yale College the degree of Master of Arts, and the same college made him a Doctor of Literature in 1901. A year later the university of his own State, at Columbia, Missouri, conferred the same degree, and then, in 1907, came the crowning honour, when venerable Oxford tendered him the doctor's robe.

"I don't know why they should give me a degree like that," he said, quaintly. "I never doctored any literature. I wouldn't know how."

He had thought never to cross the ocean again, but he declared he would travel to Mars and back, if necessary, to get that Oxford degree. He appreciated its full meaning—recognition by the world's foremost institution of learning of the achievements of one who had no learning of the institutionary kind. He sailed in June, and his sojourn in England was marked by a continuous ovation. His hotel was besieged by callers. Two secretaries were busy nearly twenty hours a day attending to visitors and mail. When he appeared on the street his name went echoing in every direction and the multitudes gathered. On the day when he rose, in his scarlet robe and black mortar-board, to receive his degree (he must have made a splendid picture in that dress, with his crown of silver hair), the vast assembly went wild. What a triumph, indeed, for the little Missouri printer-boy! It was the climax of a great career.

Mark Twain's work was always of a kind to make people talk, always important, even when it was mere

humour. Yet it was seldom that ; there was always wisdom under it, and purpose, and these things gave it dynamic force and enduring life. Some of his aphorisms—so quaint in form as to invite laughter—are yet fairly startling in their purport. His paraphrase, “When in doubt, tell the truth,” is of this sort. “Frankness is a jewel ; only the young can afford it,” he once said to the writer, apropos of a little girl’s remark. His daily speech was full of such things. The secret of his great charm was his great humanity and the gentle quaintness and sincerity of his utterance.

His work did not cease when the pressing need of money came to an end. He was full of ideas, and likely to begin a new article or story at any time. He wrote and published a number of notable sketches, articles, stories, even books, during these later years, among them that marvellous short story—“The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg.” In that story, as in most of his later work, he proved to the world that he was much more than a humorist—that he was, in fact, a great teacher, moralist, philosopher—the greatest, perhaps, of his age.

His life at Stormfield—he had never seen the place until the day of his arrival, June 18, 1908—was a peaceful and serene old age. Not that he was really old ; he never was that. His step, his manner, his point of view, were all and always young. He was fond of children and frequently had them about him. He delighted in games—especially in billiards—and in building the house at Stormfield the billiard-room was first considered. He had a genuine passion for the sport ; without it his afternoon was not complete. His mornings he was likely to pass in bed, smoking—he was always smoking—and attending to his correspondence and reading. History and the sciences interested him, and his bed was strewn with biographies and stories of astronomical and geological research. The vastness of distances and periods always impressed him. He had no head for figures, but he would

labour for hours over scientific calculations, trying to compass them and to grasp their gigantic import. I remember once finding him highly elated over the fact that he had figured out for himself the length in hours and minutes of a "light year." He showed me the pages covered with figures, and was more proud of them than if they had been the pages of an immortal story. Then we played billiards, but even his favourite game could not make him altogether forget his splendid achievement.

It was on the day before Christmas, 1909, that heavy bereavement once more came into the life of Mark Twain. His daughter Jean, long subject to epileptic attacks, was seized with a convulsion while in her bath and died before assistance reached her. He was dazed by the suddenness of the blow. His philosophy sustained him. He was glad, deeply glad for the beautiful girl that had been released.

"I never greatly envied anybody but the dead," he said, when he had looked at her. "I always envy the dead."

The coveted estate of silence, time's only absolute gift, it was the one benefaction he had ever considered worth while.

Yet the years were not unkindly to Mark Twain. They brought him sorrow, but they brought him likewise the capacity and opportunity for large enjoyment, and at the last they laid upon him a kind of benediction. Naturally impatient, he grew always more gentle, more generous, more tractable and considerate as the seasons passed. His final days may be said to have been spent in the tranquil light of a summer afternoon.

His own end followed by a few months that of his daughter. There were already indications that his heart was seriously affected, and soon after Jean's death he sought the warm climate of Bermuda. But his malady made rapid progress, and in April he returned to Stormfield. He died there just a week later, April 21, 1910.

Any attempt to designate Mark Twain's place in the world's literary history would be presumptuous now. Yet



I cannot help thinking that he will maintain his supremacy in the century that produced him. I think so because, of all the writers of that hundred years, his work was the most human—his utterances went most surely to the mark. In the long analysis of the ages it is the truth that counts, and he never approximated, never compromised, but pronounced those absolute verities to which every human being of whatever rank must instantly respond.

His understanding of subjective human nature—the vast, unwritten life within—was simply amazing. Such knowledge he acquired at the fountainhead—that is, from himself. He recognized in himself an extreme example of the human being with all the attributes of power and of weakness, and he made his exposition complete.

The world will long miss Mark Twain ; his example and his teaching will be neither ignored nor forgotten. Genius defies the laws of perspective and looms larger as it recedes. The memory of Mark Twain remains to us a living and intimate presence that to-day, even more than in life, constitutes a stately moral bulwark reared against hypocrisy and superstition—a mighty national menace to sham.

## THE LETTERS

We have no record of Mark Twain's earliest letters. No letter of his boyhood, no scrap of his earlier writing, has come to light except his pencilled name, SAM CLEMENS, laboriously inscribed on the inside of a small worn purse that once held his meagre, almost non-existent wealth.

It was not until he was seventeen years old that Sam Clemens wrote a letter any portion of which has survived. He was no longer in Hannibal. Orion's unprosperous enterprise did not satisfy him. His wish to earn money and to see the world had carried him first to St. Louis, where his sister Pamela was living, then to New York City, where a World's Fair in a Crystal Palace was in progress. The letter tells of a visit to this great exhibition. It is not complete, and the fragment bears no date, but it was written during the summer of 1853.

*Fragment of a letter from Sam L. Clemens to his sister  
Pamela Moffett, in St. Louis, summer of 1853 :*

. . . It would take more than a week to examine everything on exhibition ; and as I was only in a little over two hours to-night, I only glanced at about one-third of the articles ; and having a poor memory, I have enumerated scarcely any of even the principal objects. The visitors to the Palace average 6,000 daily—double the population of Hannibal.

I am very sorry to learn that Henry has been sick. He ought to go to the country and take exercise ; for he is not half so healthy as Ma thinks he is. If he had my walking to do, he would be another boy entirely. Four times every day I walk a little over one mile ; and working hard all day, and walking four miles, *is* exercise—I am used to it, now, though, and it is no trouble. Where is it Orion's going to ? Tell Ma my promises are faithfully

kept, and if I have my health I will take her to Ky. in the spring—I shall save money for this. Tell Jim and all the rest of them to write, and give me all the news. I am sorry to hear such bad news from Will and Captain Bowen. I shall write to Will soon. The Chatham-square Post Office and the Broadway office too, are out of my way, and I always go to the General Post Office; so you must write the direction of my letters plain, "New York City, N. Y.," without giving the street or anything of the kind, or they may go to some of the other offices. (It has just struck 2 a.m. and I always get up at 6, and am at work at 7.) You ask me where I spend my evenings. Where would you suppose, with a free printers' library containing more than 4,000 volumes within a quarter of a mile of me, and nobody at home to talk to? I shall write to Ella soon. Write soon

Truly your Brother

SAM.

P.S. I have written this by a light so dim that you nor Ma could not read by it.

He was lodging in a mechanics' cheap boarding-house in Duane Street, and we may imagine the bareness of his room, the feeble poverty of his lamp.

"Tell Ma my promises are faithfully kept." It was the day when he had left Hannibal. His mother, Jane Clemens, a resolute, wiry woman of forty-nine, had put together his few belongings. Then, holding up a little Testament:

"I want you to take hold of the end of this, Sam," she said, "and make me a promise. I want you to repeat after me these words: 'I do solemnly swear that I will not throw a card, or drink a drop of liquor while I am gone.'"

It was this oath, repeated after her, that he was keeping faithfully. The Will Bowen mentioned is a former playmate, one of Tom Sawyer's outlaw band. He had gone on the river to learn piloting with an elder brother, the "Captain." What the bad news was is no longer remembered, but it could not have been very serious, for the Bowen boys remained on the river for many years. "Ella" was Samuel Clemens's cousin

and one-time sweetheart, Ella Creel. "Jim" was Jim Wolfe, an apprentice in Orion's office, and the hero of an adventure which long after Mark Twain wrote under the title of "Jim Wolfe and the Cats."

He was working in the printing-office of John A. Gray and Green, on Cliff Street, and remained there through the summer. He must have written more than once during this period, but the next existing letter—also to Sister Pamela—was written in October.

*To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

New York . . . , Oct. Saturday 53.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have not written to any of the family for some time, from the fact, *firstly*, that I didn't know where they were, and *secondly*, because I have been fooling myself with the idea that I was going to leave New York every day for the last two weeks. I have taken a liking to the abominable place, and every time I get ready to leave, I put it off a day or so, from some unaccountable cause. It is as hard on my conscience to leave New York, as it was easy to leave Hannibal. I think I shall get off Tuesday, though.

Edwin Forrest has been playing, for the last sixteen days, at the Broadway Theatre, but I never went to see him till last night. The play was the "Gladiator." I did not like parts of it much, but other portions were really splendid. In the latter part of the last act, where the "Gladiator" (Forrest) dies at his brother's feet, (in all the fierce pleasure of gratified revenge,) the man's whole soul seems absorbed in the part he is playing; and it is really startling to see him. I am sorry I did not see him play "Damon and Pythias"—the former character being his greatest. He appears in Philadelphia on Monday night.

I have not received a letter from home lately, but got a "*Journal*" the other day, in which I see the office has been sold. I suppose Ma, Orion and Henry are in St. Louis now. If Orion has no other project in his head,

he ought to take the contract for getting out some weekly paper, if he cannot get a foremanship. Now, for such a paper as the "*Presbyterian*" (containing about 60,000,) <sup>1</sup> he could get \$20 or \$25 per week, and he and Henry could easily do the work; nothing to do but set the type and make up the forms. . . .

If my letters do not come often, you need not bother yourself about me; for if you have a brother nearly eighteen years of age, who is not able to take care of himself a few miles from home, such a brother is not worth one's thoughts: and if I don't manage to take care of *No. 1*, be assured you will never know it. I am not afraid, however; I shall ask favors from no one, and endeavor to be (and shall be) as "independent as a wood-sawyer's clerk."

I never saw such a place for military companies as New York. Go on the street when you will, you are sure to meet a company in full uniform, with all the usual appendages of drums, fifes, &c. I saw a large company of soldiers of 1812 the other day, with a '76 veteran scattered here and there in the ranks. And as I passed through one of the parks lately, I came upon a company of *boys* on parade. Their uniforms were neat, and their muskets about half the common size. Some of them were not more than seven or eight years of age; but had evidently been well-drilled.

Passage to Albany (160 miles) on the finest steamers that ply the Hudson, is now 25 cents—cheap enough, but is generally cheaper than that in the summer.

I want you to write as soon as I tell you where to direct your letter. I would let you know now, if I knew myself. I may perhaps be here a week longer; but I cannot tell. When you write tell me the whereabouts of the family. My love to Mr. Moffett and Ella. Tell Ella I intend to write to her soon, whether she wants me to nor not.

Truly your Brother,

SAML L. CLEMENS.

<sup>1</sup> Sixty thousand ems, type measurement.

He was in Philadelphia when he wrote the next letter. It is to Orion Clemens, who had disposed of his paper, but evidently was still in Hannibal. An extended description of a trip to Fairmount Park is omitted because of its length, its chief interest being the tendency it shows to descriptive writing—the field in which he would make his first great fame. There is, however, no hint of humour, and only a mild suggestion of the author of the *Innocents Abroad* in this early attempt. The letter as here given is otherwise complete, the omissions being indicated.

*To Orion Clemens, in Hannibal :*

Philadelphia, Pa. Oct. 26, 1853.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It was at least two weeks before I left New York, that I received my last letter from home : and since then, not a word have I heard from any of you. And now, since I think of it, it wasn't a letter, either, but the last number of the "Daily Journal," saying that that paper was sold, and I very naturally supposed from that, that the family had disbanded, and taken up winter quarters in St. Louis. Therefore, I have been writing to Pamela, till I've tired of it, and have received no answer. I have been writing for the last two or three weeks, to send Ma some money, but devil take me if I knew where she was, and so the money has slipped out of my pocket somehow or other, but I have a dollar left, and a good deal owing to me, which will be paid next Monday. I shall enclose the dollar in this letter, and you can hand it to her. I know it's a small amount, but then it will buy her a handkerchief, and at the same time serve as a specimen of the kind of stuff we are paid with in Philadelphia, for you see it's against the law, in Pennsylvania, to keep or pass a bill of less denomination than \$5. I have only seen two or three bank bills since I have been in the State. On Monday the hands are paid off in sparkling gold, fresh from the Mint ; so your dreams are not troubled with the fear of having doubtful money in your pocket.

I am subbing at the Inquirer office. One man has engaged me to work for him every Sunday till the first of next April, (when I shall return home to take Ma to Ky. ;) and another has engaged my services for the 24th of next month; and if I want it, I can get subbing *every night* of the week. I go to work at 7 o'clock in the evening, and work till 3 o'clock the next morning. I can go to the theatre and stay till 12 o'clock and then go to the office, and get work from that till 3 the next morning; when I go to bed, and sleep till 11 o'clock, then get up and loaf the rest of the day. The type is mostly agate and minion, with some bourgeois; and when one gets a good agate take,<sup>1</sup> he is sure to make money. I made \$2.50 last Sunday, and was laughed at by all the hands, the poorest of whom sets 11,000 on Sunday; and if I don't set 10,000, at least, next Sunday, I'll give them leave to laugh as much as they want to. Out of the 22 compositors in this office, 12 at least, set 15,000 on Sunday.

Unlike New York, I like this Philadelphia amazingly, and the people in it. There is only one thing that gets my "dander" up—and that is the hands are always *encouraging* me: telling me—"it's no use to get discouraged—no use to be down-hearted, for there is more work here than you can do!" "Down-hearted," the devil! I have not had a particle of such a feeling since I left Hannibal, more than four months ago. I fancy they'll have to wait some time till they see me down-hearted or afraid of starving while I have strength to work and am in a city of 400,000 inhabitants. When I was in Hannibal, before I had scarcely stepped out of the town limits, nothing could have convinced me that I would starve as soon as I got a little way from home. . . .

The grave of Franklin is in Christ Church-yard, cor. of Fifth and Arch streets. They keep the gates locked,

<sup>1</sup> "Agate," "minion," etc., sizes of type; "take," a piece of work. Type measurement is by ems, meaning the width of the letter m.

and one can only see the flat slab that lies over his remains and that of his wife ; but you cannot see the inscription distinctly enough to read it. The inscription, I believe, reads thus :

“ Benjamin  
and  
Deborah } Franklin ”

I counted 27 cannons (6 pounders) planted in the edge of the sidewalk in Water St. the other day. They are driven into the ground, about a foot, with the mouth end upwards. A ball is driven fast into the mouth of each, to exclude the water ; they look like so many posts. They were put there during the war. I have also seen them planted in this manner, round the old churches, in N. Y. . . .

There is one fine custom observed in Phila. A gentleman is always expected to hand up a lady's money for her. Yesterday, I sat in the front end of the 'bus, directly under the driver's box—a lady sat opposite me. She handed me her money, which was right. But, Lord ! a St. Louis lady would think herself ruined, if she should be so familiar with a stranger. In St. Louis a man will sit in the front end of the stage, and see a lady stagger from the far end, to pay her fare. The Phila. 'bus drivers cannot cheat. In front of the stage is a thing like an office clock, with figures from 0 to 40, marked on its face. When the stage starts, the hand of the clock is turned towards the 0. When you get in and pay your fare, the driver strikes a bell, and the hand moves to the figure 1—that is, “one fare, and paid for,” and there is your receipt, as good as if you had it in your pocket. When a passenger pays his fare and the driver does not strike the bell immediately, he is greeted “Strike that bell ! will you ?”

I must close now. I intend visiting the Navy Yard, Mint, etc., before I write again. You must write often. You see I have nothing to write interesting to you, while you can write nothing that will not interest me. Don't



say my letters are not *long* enough. Tell Jim Wolfe to write. Tell all the boys where I am, and to write. Jim Robinson, particularly. I wrote to him from N. Y. Tell me all that is going on in H—l.

Truly your Brother

SAM.

“H—l” is his abbreviation for Hannibal. The doubtful money he mentions was the paper issued by private banks, “wild cat,” as it was called. He had been paid with it in New York, and found it usually at a discount—sometimes even worthless.

Orion Clemens, on a trip to Keokuk, had casually married there, and a little later removed his office to that city. He did not move the paper; perhaps it did not seem worth while, and in Keokuk he confined himself to commercial printing. The Ben Franklin Book and Job Office started with fair prospects. Henry Clemens and a boy named Dick Hingham were the assistants, and somewhat later, when brother Sam came up from St. Louis on a visit, an offer of five dollars a week and board induced him to remain. Later, when it became increasingly difficult to pay the five dollars, Orion took his brother into partnership, which perhaps relieved the financial stress, though the office methods would seem to have left something to be desired.

*To Mrs. Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

Keokuk, Iowa. June 10th, 1856.

MY DEAR MOTHER & SISTER,—I have nothing to write. Everything is going on well. The Directory is coming on finely. I have to work on it occasionally, which I don't like a particle. I don't like to work at too many things at once. They take Henry and Dick away from me too. Before we commenced the Directory, I could tell before breakfast just how much work could be done during the day, and manage accordingly—but now, they throw all my plans into disorder by taking my hands away from their work. I have nothing to do with the book—if I did I would have the two book hands do more work than they do, or else I would drop it. It is not a mere *supposition* that they do not work fast enough—I *know* it;

for yesterday the two book hands were at work all day, Henry and Dick all the afternoon, on the advertisements, and they set up five pages and a half—and I set up two pages and a quarter of the same matter *after supper*, night before last, and I don't work fast on such things. They are either excessively slow motioned or very lazy. I am not getting along well with the job work. I can't work blindly—without system. I gave Dick a job yesterday, which I calculated he would set in two hours and I could work off in three, and therefore just finish it by supper time, but he was transferred to the Directory, and the job, promised this morning, remains untouched. Through all the great pressure of job work lately, I never before failed in a promise of the kind.

Your Son

SAM.

Excuse brevity—this is my 3rd letter to-night.

He seems, on the whole, to have been rather happy in Keokuk. But he had grown dissatisfied, and when one day some weeks later there fell into his hands an account of the riches of the newly explored regions of the upper Amazon, he promptly decided to find his fortune at the headwaters of the great South-American river. The second letter reports this momentous decision. It was written to Henry Clemens, who was temporarily absent—probably in Hannibal.

*To Henry Clemens :*

Keokuk, August 5th, '56.

MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . Ward and I held a long consultation, Sunday morning, and the result was that we two have determined to start to Brazil, if possible, in *six weeks* from now, in order to look carefully into matters there and report to Dr. Martin in time for him to follow on the first of March. We propose going *via* New York. Now, between you and I and the fence you must say nothing about this to *Orion*, for he thinks that Ward is to go clear through alone, and that I am to stop at New York or New Orleans until he reports. But that don't

suit me. My confidence in human nature does not extend quite that far. I won't depend upon Ward's judgment, or anybody's else—I want to see with my own eyes, and form my own opinion. But you know what Orion is. When he gets a notion into his head, and more especially if it is an erroneous one, the Devil can't get it out again. So I know better than to combat his arguments long, but apparently yielded, inwardly determined to go clear through. Ma knows my determination, but *even she* counsels me to keep it from Orion. She says I can treat him as I did her when I started to St. Louis and went to New York—I can start to New York and go to South America! Although Orion talks grandly about furnishing me with fifty or a hundred dollars in six weeks, I could not depend upon him for ten dollars, so I have “feelers” out in several directions, and have already asked for a hundred dollars from one source (keep it to yourself.) I will lay on my oars for awhile, and see how the wind sets, when I may probably try to get more. Mrs. Creel is a great friend of mine, and has some influence with Ma and Orion, though I reckon they would not acknowledge it. I am going up there tomorrow, to press her into my service. I shall take care that Ma and Orion are plentifully supplied with South American books. They have Herndon's Report now. Ward and the Dr. and myself will hold a grand consultation tonight at the office. We have agreed that no more shall be admitted into our company.

I believe the Guards went down to Quincy today to escort *our first locomotive* home.

Write soon.

Your Brother,

SAM.

Readers familiar with the life of Mark Twain know that none of the would-be adventurers found their way to the Amazon. His two associates gave up the plan, probably for lack of means. Young Clemens himself found a fifty-dollar bill

one bleak November day blowing along the streets of Keokuk, and after duly advertising his find without result, set out for the Amazon, by way of Cincinnati and New Orleans.

"I advertised the find and left for the Amazon the same day," he once declared, a statement which we may take with a literary discount.

He remained in Cincinnati that winter (1856-57) working at his trade. In April he took up once more the journey toward South America, but presently forgot the Amazon altogether in the new career that opened to him. All through his boyhood and youth Samuel Clemens had wanted to be a pilot. Now came the long-deferred opportunity. On the little Cincinnati steamer, the *Paul Jones*, there was a pilot named Horace Bixby. Young Clemens idling in the pilot-house was one morning seized with the old ambition, and laid siege to Bixby to teach him the river. The terms finally agreed upon specified a fee to Bixby of five hundred dollars, one hundred down, the balance when the pupil had completed the course and was earning money. But all this has been told in full elsewhere, and is only summarized here because the letters fail to complete the story.

Bixby soon made some trips up the Missouri River, and in his absence turned his apprentice, or "cub," over to other pilots, such being the river custom. Young Clemens, in love with the life, and a favourite with his superiors, had a happy time until he came under a pilot named Brown. Brown was illiterate and tyrannical, and from the beginning of their association pilot and apprentice disliked each other cordially.

It is at this point that the letters begin once more—the first having been written when young Clemens, now twenty-two years old, had been on the river nearly a year.

*To Orion Clemens and Wife, in Keokuk, Iowa :*

Saint Louis, March 9th, 1858.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,—I must take advantage of the opportunity now presented to write you, but I shall necessarily be dull, as I feel uncommonly stupid. We have had a hard trip this time. Left Saint Louis three weeks ago on the *Pennsylvania*. The weather was very cold, and the ice running densely. We got 15 miles below town, landed the boat, and then one pilot. Second Mate and four deck hands took the sounding boat and shoved out in the ice to hunt the channel. They failed to find it,

and the ice drifted them ashore. The pilot left the men with the boat and walked back to us, a mile and a half. Then the other pilot and myself, with a larger crew of men started out and met with the same fate. We drifted ashore just below the other boat. Then the fun commenced. We made fast a line 20 fathoms long, to the bow of the yawl, and put the men (both crews) to it like horses, on the shore. Brown, the pilot, stood in the bow, with an oar, to keep her head out, and I took the tiller. We would start the men, and all would go well till the yawl would bring up on a heavy cake of ice, and then the men would drop like so many ten-pins, while Brown assumed the horizontal in the bottom of the boat. After an hour's hard work we got back, with ice half an inch thick on the oars. Sent back and warped up the other yawl, and then George (the first mentioned pilot,) and myself, took a double crew of fresh men and tried it again. This time we found the channel in less than half an hour, and landed on an island till the Pennsylvania came along and took us off. The next day was colder still. I was out in the yawl twice, and then we got through, but the infernal steamboat came near running over us. We went ten miles further, landed, and George and I cleared out again—found the channel first trial, but got caught in the gorge and drifted helplessly down the river. The Ocean Spray came along and started into the ice after us, but although she didn't succeed in her kind intention of taking us aboard, her waves washed us out, and that was all we wanted. We landed on an island, built a big fire and waited for the boat. She started, and ran aground! It commenced raining and sleeting, and a very interesting time we had on that barren sandbar for the next four hours, when the boat got off and took us aboard. The next day was terribly cold. We sounded Hat Island, warped up around a bar and sounded again—but in order to understand our situation you will have to read Dr. Kane. It would have been impossible to

get back to the boat. But the Maria Denning was aground at the head of the island—they hailed us—we ran alongside and they hoisted us in and thawed us out. We had then been out in the yawl from 4 o'clock in the morning till half past 9 without being near a fire. There was a thick coating of ice over men, yawl, ropes and everything else, and we looked like rock-candy statuary. We got to Saint Louis this morning, after an absence of 3 weeks—that boat generally makes the trip in 2.

Henry was doing little or nothing here, and I sent him to our clerk to work his way for a trip, by measuring wood piles, counting coal boxes, and other clerkly duties, which he performed satisfactorily. He may go down with us again, for I expect he likes our bill of fare better than that of his boarding house. . . .

I got here too late to see the funeral of the 10 victims by the burning of the Pacific hotel in 7th street. Ma says there were 10 hearses, with the fire companies (their engines in mourning—firemen in uniform,) the various benevolent societies in uniform and mourning, and a multitude of citizens and strangers, forming, altogether, a procession of 30,000 persons! One steam fire engine was drawn by four white horses, with crape festoons on their heads.

Well, I am—just—about—asleep—  
Your brother

SAM.

The Doctor Kane of this letter is, of course, Dr. Elsha Kent Kane, the American Arctic explorer. Any book of exploration always appealed to Mark Twain, and in those days Kane was a favourite.

The paragraph concerning Henry, and his employment on the *Pennsylvania*, begins the story of a tragedy. Henry, a gentle, faithful boy, shared with his brother the enmity of the pilot Brown. Some two months following the date of the foregoing letter, on a down trip of the *Pennsylvania*, an unprovoked attack made by Brown upon the boy brought his brother Sam to the rescue. Brown received a good pummelling at the

hands of the future humorist, who, though upheld by the captain, decided to quit the *Pennsylvania* at New Orleans and to come up the river by another boat. The Brown episode has no special bearing on the main tragedy, though now in retrospect it seems closely related to it. Samuel Clemens, coming up the river on the *A. T. Lacey*, two days behind the *Pennsylvania*, heard a voice shout as they approached the Greenville, Mississippi, landing :

"The *Pennsylvania* is blown up just below Memphis, at Ship Island ! One hundred and fifty lives lost !"

It was a true report. At six o'clock of a warm, mid-June morning, while loading wood, sixty miles below Memphis, the *Pennsylvania's* boilers had exploded with fearful results. Henry Clemens was among the injured. He was still alive when his brother reached Memphis on the *Lacey*, but died a few days later. Samuel Clemens had idolized the boy, and regarded himself responsible for his death. The letter that follows shows that he was overwrought by the scenes about him and the strain of watching, yet the anguish of it is none the less real.

*To Mrs. Orion Clemens :*

Memphis, Tenn , Friday, June 18th, 1858.

DEAR SISTER MOLLIE,—Long before this reaches you, my poor Henry—my darling, my pride, my glory, my *all*, will have finished his blameless career, and the light of my life will have gone out in utter darkness. (O, God ! this is hard to bear.) Hardened, hopeless,—aye, lost—lost—lost and ruined sinner as I am—I, even I, have humbled myself to the ground and prayed as never man prayed before, that the great God might let this cup pass from me—that he would strike me to the earth, but spare my brother—that he would pour out the fulness of his just wrath upon my wicked head, but have mercy, mercy, mercy upon that unoffending boy. The horrors of three days have swept over me—they have blasted my youth and left me an old man before my time. Mollie, there are gray hairs in my head tonight. For forty-eight hours I labored at the bedside of my poor burned and bruised, but uncomplaining brother, and then the star of my hope went out and left me in the gloom of

despair. Men take me by the hand and *congratulate* me, and call me "lucky" because I was not on the *Pennsylvania* when she blew up! May God forgive them, for they know not what they say.

Mollie you do not understand why I was not on that boat—I will tell you. I left Saint Louis on her, but on the way down, Mr. Brown, the pilot that was killed by the explosion (poor fellow,) quarreled with Henry without cause, while I was steering. Henry started out of the pilot-house—Brown jumped up and collared him—turned him half way around and *struck him in the face!*—and him nearly six feet high—struck my little brother. I was wild from that moment. I left the boat to steer herself, and avenged the insult—and the Captain said I was right—that he would discharge Brown in N. Orleans if he could get another pilot, and would do it in St. Louis, anyhow. Of course both of us could not return to St. Louis on the same boat—no pilot could be found, and the Captain sent me to the A. T. Lacey, with orders to her Captain to bring me to Saint Louis. Had another pilot been found, poor Brown would have been the "lucky" man.

I was on the *Pennsylvania* five minutes before she left N. Orleans, and I must tell you the truth, Mollie—*three hundred* human beings perished by that fearful disaster. Henry was asleep—was blown up—then fell back on the hot boilers, and I suppose that rubbish fell on him, for he is injured internally. He got into the water and swam to shore, and got into the flatboat with the other survivors.<sup>1</sup> He had nothing on but his wet shirt, and he lay there burning up with a southern sun and freezing in the wind till the Kate Frisbee came along. His wounds were not dressed till he got to Memphis, 15 hours after the explosion. He was senseless and motionless for 12 hours after that. But may God bless Memphis, the noblest city on the face of the earth. She has done her duty

<sup>1</sup> Henry had returned once to the *Pennsylvania* to render assistance to the passengers. Later he had somehow made his way to the lifeboat.



by these poor afflicted creatures—especially Henry, for he has had five—aye, ten, fifteen, *twenty* times the care and attention that any one else has had. Dr. Peyton, the best physician in Memphis (he is exactly like the portraits of Webster,) sat by him for 36 hours. There are 32 scalded men in that room, and you would know Dr. Peyton better than I can describe him, if you could follow him around and hear each man murmur as he passes—“May the God of Heaven bless you, Doctor!” The ladies have done well, too. Our second Mate, a handsome, noble hearted young fellow, will die. Yesterday a beautiful girl of 15 stooped timidly down by his side and handed him a pretty bouquet. The poor suffering boy’s eyes kindled, his lips quivered out a gentle “God bless you, Miss,” and he burst into tears. He made them write her name on a card for him, that he might not forget it.

Pray for me, Mollie, and pray for my poor sinless brother.

Your unfortunate Brother,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.’

P. S. I got here two days after Henry.

It is said that Mark Twain never really recovered from the tragedy of his brother’s death. He went back to the river, and in September of the same year, after an apprenticeship of less than eighteen months, received his licence as a St. Louis and New Orleans pilot, and was accepted by his old chief, Bixby, as full partner on an important boat. In *Life on the Mississippi* Mark Twain makes the period of his study from two to two and a half years, but this is merely an attempt to magnify his dullness. He was, in fact, an apt pupil and a pilot of very high class.

Clemens was now suddenly lifted to a position of importance. The Mississippi River pilot of those days was a person of distinction, earning a salary then regarded as princely. Certainly two hundred and fifty dollars a month was large for a boy of twenty-three. At once, of course, he became the head of the Clemens family. His brother Orion was ten years older, but he had not the gift of success. By common consent the younger

brother assumed permanently the position of family counsellor and financier. We expect him to feel the importance of his new position, and he is too human to disappoint us. Incidentally, we notice an improvement in his English. He no longer writes "between you and I."

*Fragment of a letter to Orion Clemens. Written at St. Louis in 1859 :*

. . . I am not talking nonsense, now—I am in earnest, I want you to keep your troubles and your plans out of the reach of meddlers, until the latter are consummated, so that in case you fail, no one will know it but yourself.

Above all things (between you and me) never tell Ma any of your troubles ; she never slept a wink the night your last letter came, and she looks distressed yet. Write only cheerful news to her. You know that she will not be satisfied so long as she thinks anything is going on that she is ignorant of—and she makes a little fuss about it when her suspicions are awakened ; but that makes no difference—I know that it is better that she be kept in the dark concerning all things of an unpleasant nature. She upbraids me occasionally for giving her only the bright side of my affairs (but unfortunately for her she has to put up with it, for I know that troubles that I curse awhile and forget, would disturb her slumbers for some time.) (Parenthesis No. 2—Possibly because she is deprived of the soothing consolation of swearing.) Tell her the good news and me the bad.

Putting all things together, I begin to think I am rather lucky than otherwise—a notion which I was slow to take up. The other night I was about to round to for a storm—but concluded that I could find a smoother bank somewhere. I landed 5 miles below. The storm came—passed away and did not injure us. Coming up, day before yesterday, I looked at the spot I first chose, and half the trees on the bank were torn to shreds. We couldn't have lived 5 minutes in such a tornado. And I am also lucky

in having a berth, while all the young pilots are idle. This is the luckiest circumstance that ever befell me. Not on account of the wages—for that is a secondary consideration—but from the fact that the City of Memphis is the largest boat in the trade and the hardest to pilot, and consequently I can get a reputation on her, which is a thing I never could accomplish on a transient boat. I can “bank” in the neighbourhood of \$100 a month on her, and that will satisfy me for the present (principally because the other youngsters are *sucking their fingers*.) Bless me! what a pleasure there is in revenge! and what vast respect Prosperity commands! Why, six months ago I could enter the “Rooms,” and receive only a customary fraternal greeting—but now they say, “Why, how *are* you, old fellow—when did you get in?”

And the young pilots who used to tell me, patronizingly, that I could never learn the river cannot keep from showing a little of their chagrin at seeing me so far ahead of them. Permit me to “blow my horn,” for I derive a *living* pleasure from these things, and I must confess that when I go to pay my dues, I rather like to let the d—d rascals get a glimpse of a hundred dollar bill peeping out from amongst notes of smaller dimensions, whose face I do *not* exhibit! You will despise this egotism, but I tell you there is a “stern joy” in it. . . .

The clairvoyant of the following letter was Madame Caprell, famous in her day. Clemens had been urged to consult her, and one idle afternoon concluded to make the experiment. The letter reporting the matter to his brother is fragmentary, and is the last remaining to us of the piloting period.

*Fragment of a letter to Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:*

New Orleans February 6, 1861.

. . . She's a very pleasant little lady—rather pretty—about 28,—say 5 feet 2 and one quarter—would

weigh 116—has black eyes and hair—is polite and intelligent—used good language, and talks much faster than I do.

She invited me into the little back parlor, closed the door; and we were alone. We sat down facing each other. Then she asked my age. Then she put her hands before her eyes a moment, and commenced talking as if she had a good deal to say and not much time to say it in. Something after this style :

MADAME. Yours is a watery planet; you gain your livelihood on the water; but you should have been a lawyer—there is where your talents lie: you might have distinguished yourself as an orator, or as an editor; you have written a great deal; you write well—but you are rather out of practice; no matter—you will be *in* practice some day; you have a superb constitution, and as excellent health as any man in the world; you have great powers of endurance; in your profession your strength holds out against the longest sieges without flagging; still, the upper part of your lungs, the top of them is slightly affected—you must take care of yourself; you do not drink, but you use *entirely* too much tobacco; and you must stop it; mind, not moderate, but *stop* the use of it totally; then I can almost promise you 86 when you will surely die; otherwise look out for 28, 31, 34, 47, and 65; be careful—for you are not of a long-lived race, that is on your *father's* side; you are the only healthy member of your family, and the only one in it who has anything like the certainty of attaining to a great age—so, stop using tobacco, and be careful of yourself. . . . In some respects you take after your father, but you are much *more* like your mother, who belongs to the long-lived, energetic side of the house. . . . You never brought all your energies to bear upon any subject but what you accomplished it—for instance, you are self-made, self-educated.

S. L. C. Which proves nothing.

MADAME. Don't interrupt. When you sought your present occupation you found a thousand obstacles in the way—obstacles unknown—not even suspected by any save you and me, since you keep such matters to yourself—but you fought your way, and hid the long struggle under a mask of cheerfulness, which saved your friends anxiety on your account. To do all this requires all the qualities I have named.

S. L. C. You flatter well, Madame.

MADAME. Don't interrupt. Up to within a short time you had always lived from hand to mouth—now you are in easy circumstances—for which you need give credit to no one but yourself. The turning point in your life occurred in 1840-7-8.

S. L. C. Which was ?

MADAME. A death perhaps, and this threw you upon the world and made you what you are ; it was always intended that you should make yourself ; therefore, it was well that this calamity occurred as early as it did. You will never die of water, although your career upon it in the future seems well sprinkled with misfortune. You will continue upon the water for some time yet ; you will not retire finally until ten years from now. . . . What is your brother's age ? 35—and a lawyer ? and in pursuit of an office ? Well, he stands a better chance than the other two, and he may get it ; he is too visionary—is always flying off on a new hobby ; this will never do—tell him I said so. He is a good lawyer—a *very* good lawyer—and a fine speaker—is very popular and much respected, and makes many friends ; but although he retains their friendship, he loses their confidence by displaying his instability of character. . . . The land he has now will be very valuable after a while—

S. L. C. Say 250 years hence, or thereabouts. Madame—

MADAME. No—less time—but never mind the land, that is a secondary consideration—let him drop that for the present, and devote himself to his business and politics

with all his might, for he must hold offices under the Government. . . .

After a while you will possess a good deal of property—retire at the end of ten years—after which your pursuits will be literary—try the law—you will certainly succeed. I am done now. If you have any questions to ask—ask them freely—and if it be in my power, I will answer without reserve—without reserve.

I asked a few questions of minor importance—paid her \$2—and left, under the decided impression that going to the fortune teller's was just as good as going to the opera, and the cost scarcely a trifle more—*ergo*, I will disguise myself and go again, one of these days, when other amusements fail. Now isn't she the devil? That is to say, isn't she a right smart little woman?

When you want money, let Ma know, and she will send it. She and Pamela are always fussing about change, so I sent them a hundred and twenty quarters yesterday—fiddler's change enough to last till I get back, I reckon.

SAM.

A little more than two months after the Caprell letter was written Fort Sumter was fired upon. Mark Twain had made his last trip as a pilot up the river to St. Louis—the nation was plunged into a four years' conflict.

There are no letters of this immediate period. Young Clemens went to Hannibal, and enlisting in a private company, composed mainly of old schoolmates, went soldiering for two rainy, inglorious weeks, by the end of which he had had enough of war, and furthermore had discovered that he was more of a Union abolitionist than a slave-holding secessionist, as he had at first supposed. Convictions were likely to be rather infirm during those early days of the war, and subject to change without notice. Especially was this so in a border State.

Clemens went from the battle-front to Keokuk, where Orion was preparing to accept the appointment prophesied by Madame Caprell. Orion was a staunch Unionist, and a member of Lincoln's Cabinet had offered him the secretaryship of the new Territory of Nevada. Orion had accepted, and only needed funds to carry him to his destination. His pilot brother had the funds, and upon being appointed "private" secretary,

agreed to pay both passages on the overland stage, which would bear them across the great plains from St. Jo to Carson City. Mark Twain, in *Roughing It*, has described that glorious journey and the frontier life that followed it. His letters form a supplement of realism to a tale that is more or less fictitious, though marvellously true in colour and background.

*Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens, in St. Louis :*

(Date not given, but Sept. or Oct., 1861.)

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you *will* all come out here someday. But I shan't consent to invite you, until we can receive you in *style*. But I guess we shall be able to do that, one of these days. I intend that Pamela shall live on Lake Bigler until she can knock a bull down with her fist—say, about three months.

“Tell everything as it is—no better, and no worse.” Well, “Gold Hill” sells at \$5,000 per foot, cash down; “Wild cat” isn't worth ten cents. The country is fabulously rich in gold, silver, copper, lead, coal, iron, quicksilver, marble, granite, chalk, plaster of Paris, (gypsum,) thieves, murderers, desperadoes, ladies, children, lawyers, Christians, Indians, Chinamen, Spaniards, gamblers, sharpers, coyotes (pronounced Ki-yo-ties,) poets, preachers, and jackass rabbits. I overheard a gentleman say, the other day, that it was “the d—dest country under the sun”—and that comprehensive conception I fully subscribe to. It never rains here, and the dew never falls. No flowers grow here, and no green thing gladdens the eye. The birds that fly over the land carry their provisions with them. Only the crow and the raven tarry with us. Our city lies in the midst of a desert of the purest—most unadulterated, and uncompromising *sand*—in which infernal soil nothing but that fag-end of vegetable creation, “sage-brush,” ventures to grow. If you will take a lilliputian cedar tree for a model, and build a dozen imitations of it with the stiffest article of telegraph wire—set them one foot apart and then try to walk

through them, you'll understand (provided the floor is covered 12 inches deep with sand,) what it is to wander through a sage-brush desert. When crushed, sage-brush emits an odor which isn't exactly magnolia and equally isn't exactly polecat—but it a sort of compromise between the two. It looks a good deal like grease-wood, and is the ugliest plant that was ever conceived of. It is gray in color. On the plains, sage-brush and grease-wood grow about twice as large as the common geranium—and in my opinion they are a very good substitute for that useless vegetable. Grease-wood is a perfect—*most* perfect imitation in miniature of a live oak tree—barring the color of it. As to the *other* fruits and flowers of the country, there ain't any, except "Pulu" or "Tuler," or whatever they call it,—a species of unpoetical willow that grows on the banks of the Carson—a *river*, 20 yards wide, knee-deep, and so villainously rapid and crooked, that it looks like it had wandered into the country without intending it, and had run about in a bewildered way and got lost, in its hurry to get out again before some thirsty man came along and drank it up. I said we are situated in a flat, sandy desert—true. And surrounded on all sides by such prodigious mountains, that when you gaze at them awhile,—and begin to conceive of their grandeur—and next to feel their vastness expanding your soul—and ultimately find yourself growing and swelling and spreading into a giant—I say when this point is reached, you look disdainfully down upon the insignificant village of Carson, and in that instant you are seized with a burning desire to stretch forth your hand, put the city in your pocket, and walk off with it.

As to churches, I believe they *have* got a Catholic one here, but like that one the New York firemen spoke of, I believe "they don't *run* her now." Now, although we are *surrounded* by sand, the greatest part of the town is built upon what was once a very pretty grassy spot; and the streams of pure water that used to poke about it



in rural sloth and solitude, now pass through on dusty streets and gladden the hearts of men by reminding them that there is at least something here that hath its prototype among the homes they left behind them. And up "King's Canon," (please pronounce can-yon, after the manner of the natives,) there are "ranches," or farms, where they say hay grows, and grass, and beets and onions, and turnips, and other "truck" which is suitable for cows—yes, and even Irish potatoes; also, cabbages, peas and beans.

The houses are mostly frame, unplastered, but "papered" inside with flour-sacks sewed together,—and the handsomer the "brand" upon the sacks is, the neater the house looks. Occasionally, you stumble on a stone house. On account of the dryness of the country, the shingles on the houses warp till they look like short joints of stove pipe split lengthwise.

(Remainder missing.)

There had been no secretary work for him to do, and no provision for payment. He found his profit in studying human nature and in prospecting native resources. He was not interested in mining—not yet. With a boy named John Kinney he made an excursion to Lake Bigler—now Tahoe—and located a timber claim, really of great value. They were supposed to build a fence around it, but they were too full of the enjoyment of camp-life to complete it. They put in most of their time wandering through the stately forest or drifting over the transparent lake in a boat left there by lumbermen. They built themselves a brush house, but they did not sleep in it. In *Roughing It* he writes, "It never occurred to us, for one thing; and, besides, it was built to hold the ground, and that was enough. We did not wish to strain it."

They were having a glorious time, when their camp-fire got away from them and burned up their claim. His next letter, of which the beginning is missing, describes the fire.

*Fragment of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett,  
in St. Louis:*

. . . The level ranks of flame were relieved at intervals by the standard-bearers, as we called the tall dead trees,

wrapped in fire, and waving their blazing banners a hundred feet in the air. Then we could turn from this scene to the Lake, and see every branch, and leaf, and cataract of flame upon its bank perfectly reflected as in a gleaming, fiery mirror. The mighty roaring of the conflagration, together with our solitary and somewhat unsafe position (for there was no one within six miles of us,) rendered the scene very impressive. Occasionally, one of us would remove his pipe from his mouth and say,—“*Superb! magnificent! Beautiful!*—but—by the Lord God Almighty, if we attempt to sleep in this little patch tonight, we’ll never live till morning!—for if we don’t burn up, we’ll certainly suffocate.” But he was persuaded to sit up until we felt pretty safe as far as the *fire* was concerned, and then we turned in, with many misgivings. When we got up in the morning, we found that the fire had burned small pieces of drift wood within six feet of our boat, and had made its way to within 4 or 5 steps of us on the South side. We looked like *lava* men, covered as we were with ashes, and begrimed with smoke. We were very black in the face, but we soon washed ourselves white again.

John D. Kinney, a Cincinnati boy, and a first-rate fellow, too, who came out with Judge Turner, was my comrade. We staid at the Lake four days—I had plenty of fun, for John constantly reminded me of Sam Bowen when we were on our campaign in Missouri. But first and foremost, for *Annie’s*, *Mollie’s*, and *Pamela’s* comfort, be it known that I have never been guilty of profane language since I have been in this Territory, and Kinney hardly ever swears.—But *sometimes* human nature gets the better of him. On the second day we started to go by land to the lower camp, a distance of three miles, over the mountains, each carrying an axe. I don’t think we got *lost* exactly, but we wandered four hours over the steepest, rockiest and most dangerous piece of country in the world. I couldn’t keep from laughing at Kinney’s

distress, so I kept behind, so that he could not see me. After he would get over a dangerous place, with infinite labor and constant apprehension, he would stop, lean on his axe, and look around, then behind, then ahead, and then drop his head and ruminate awhile. Then he would draw a long sigh, and say: "Well—could any Billygoat have scaled that place without breaking his —— neck?" And I would reply, "No,—I don't think he could." "No—you don't think he could—" (mimicking me,) "Why don't you *curse* the infernal place? You know you *want* to.—I do, and *will* curse the———thieving country as long as I live." Then we would toil on in silence for awhile. Finally I told him—"Well, John, what if we *don't* find our way out of this today—we'll know all about the country when we *do* get out." "Oh stuff—I know enough—and *too much* about the d—d villainous locality already." Finally, we reached the camp. But as we brought no provisions with us, the first subject that presented itself to us was, how to get back. John swore he wouldn't *walk* back, so we rolled a drift log apiece into the Lake and set about making paddles, intending to straddle the logs and paddle ourselves back home sometime or other. But the Lake objected—got stormy, and we had to give it up. So we set out for the only house on this side of the Lake—three miles from there, down the shore. We found the way without any trouble, reached there before sundown, played three games of cribbage, borrowed a dug-out and pulled back six miles to the upper camp. As we had eaten nothing since sunrise, we did not waste time in cooking our supper or in eating it, either. After supper we got out our pipes—built a rousing camp fire in the open air—established a faro bank (an institution of this country,) on our huge flat granite dining table, and bet white beans till one o'clock, when John went to bed. We were up before the sun the next morning, went out on the Lake and caught a fine trout for breakfast. But unfortunately, I spoilt part of the breakfast. We had coffee

and tea boiling on the fire in coffee-pots, and fearing they might not be strong enough, I added more ground coffee, and more tea, but—you know mistakes will happen—I put the tea in the coffee-pot, and the coffee in the tea-pot—and if you imagine that they were not villainous mixtures, just try the effect once. . . .

Remember me to all my St. Louis and Keokuk friends, and tell Challie and Hallie Renson that I heard a military band play “What are the Wild Waves Saying?” the other night, and it reminded me very forcibly of them. It brought Ella Creel and Belle across the Desert too in an instant, for they sang the song in Orion’s yard the first time I ever heard it. It was like meeting an old friend. I tell you I could have swallowed that whole band, trombone and all, if such a compliment would have been any gratification to them.

Love to the young folks,

SAM.

He was beginning to be mildly interested in mining, and, with his brother Orion, had acquired “feet” in an Esmeralda camp. In his next letter he gives us the size of this claim, which he has visited. His interest, however, still appears to be chiefly in his timber claim on Lake Bigler (Tahoe), though we are never to hear of it again after this letter.

*To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

Carson City, Oct. 25, 1861.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have just finished reading your letter and Ma’s of Sept. 8th. How in the world could they have been so long coming? You ask me if I have forgotten my promise to lay a claim for Mr. Moffett. By no means. I have already laid a timber claim on the borders of a lake (Bigler) which throws Como in the shade—and if we succeed in getting one Mr. Jones to move his saw-mill up there, Mr. Moffett can just consider that claim better than bank stock. Jones says he will move

his mill up next spring. In that claim I took up about two miles in length by one in width—and the names in it are as follows: “Sam. L. Clemens, Wm. A. Moffett, Thos. Nye” and three others. It is situated on “Sam Clemens Bay”—so named by Capt. Nye—and it goes by that name among the inhabitants of that region. I had better stop about “the Lake,” though,—for whenever I think of it I want to go there and *die*, the place is so beautiful. I’ll build a country seat there one of these days that will make the Devil’s mouth water if he ever visits the earth. Jim Lampton will never know whether I laid a claim there for him or not until he comes here *himself*. We have now got about 1,650 feet of mining ground—and if it proves *good*, Mr. Moffett’s name will go in—if not, I can get “feet” for him in the Spring which *will* be good. You see, Pamela, the trouble does not consist in getting mining ground—for that is plenty enough—but the money to work it with after you get it is the mischief. When I was in Esmeralda, a young fellow gave me fifty feet in the “Black Warrior”—an unprospected claim. The other day he wrote me that he had gone down eight feet on the ledge, and found it eight feet thick—and pretty good rock, too. He said he could take out rock *now* if there were a mill to crush it—but the mills are all engaged (there are only four of them) so, if I were willing, he would suspend work until Spring. I wrote him to let it alone at present—because, you see, in the Spring I can go down myself and help him look after it. There will then be twenty mills there. Orion and I have confidence enough in this country to think that if the war will let us alone we can make Mr. Moffett rich without its ever costing him a cent of money or particle of trouble. We shall lay plenty of claims for him, but if they *never* *pay* him anything, they will never cost him anything, Orion and I are not financiers. Therefore, you *must* persuade Uncle Jim to come out here and help us in that line. I have written to him twice to come.

I wrote him today. In both letters I told him not to let you or Ma know that we dealt in such romantic nonsense as "brilliant prospects," because I always did hate for any one to know what my plans or hopes or prospects were—for, if I kept people in ignorance in these matters, no one could be disappointed but myself, if they were not realized. You know I never told you that I went on the river under a promise to pay Bixby \$500, until I had paid the money and cleared my skirts of the possibility of having my judgment criticised. I would not say anything about our prospects now, if we were nearer home. But I suppose at this distance you are more anxious than you would be if you saw us every month—and therefore it is hardly fair to keep you in the dark. However, keep these matters to yourselves, and then if we fail, we'll keep the laugh in the family.

What we want now is something that will commence paying immediately. We have got a chance to get into a claim where they say a tunnel has been run 150 feet, and the ledge struck. I got a horse yesterday, and went out with the Attorney-General and the claim-owner—and we tried to go to the claim by a new route, and got lost in the mountains—sunset overtook us before we found the claim—my horse got too lame to carry me, and I got down and drove him ahead of me till within four miles of town—then we sent Rice on ahead. Bunker, (whose horse was in good condition,) undertook to lead mine, and I followed after him. Darkness shut him out from my view in less than a minute, and within the next minute I lost the road and got to wandering in the sage brush. I would find the road occasionally and then lose it again in a minute or so. I got to Carson about nine o'clock, at night, but not by the road I traveled when I left it. The General says my horse did very well for awhile, but soon refused to lead. Then he dismounted, and had a jolly time driving both horses ahead of him and chasing them here and there through the sage-brush (it does my *soul* good when

I think of it) until he got to town, when both animals deserted him, and he cursed them handsomely and came home alone. Of course the horses went to their stables.

Tell Sammy I will lay a claim for him, and he must come out and attend to it. He must get rid of that propensity for tumbling down, though, for when we get fairly started here, I don't think we shall have time to pick up those who fall. . . .

That is Stoughter's house, I expect, that Cousin Jim has moved into. This is just the country for Cousin Jim to live in. I don't believe it would take him six months to make \$100,000 here, if he had 3,000 dollars to commence with. I suppose he can't leave his family though.

Tell Mrs. Benson I never intend to be a lawyer. I have been a slave several times in my life, but I'll never be one again. I always intend to be so situated (*unless* I marry,) that I can "pull up stakes" and clear out whenever I feel like it.

We are very thankful to you, Pamela, for the papers you send. We have received half a dozen or more, and, next to letters, they are the most welcome visitors we have.

Write *oftener*, Pamela.

Yr. Brother

SAM.

The "Cousin Jim" mentioned in this letter is the original of the character of Colonel Sellers. Whatever Mark Twain's later opinion of Cousin Jim Lampton's financial genius may have been, he seems to have respected it at this time.

More than three months pass until we have another letter, and in that time the mining fever had become well seated. Mark Twain himself was full of the Sellers optimism, and it was bound to overflow, fortify as he would against it.

He met with little enough encouragement. With three companions, in midwinter, he made a mining excursion to the much exploited Humboldt region, returning empty-handed after a month or two of hard experience. This is the trip picturesquely described in Chapters XXVII to XXXIII of *Roughing It*.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis

Carson City, Feb. 8, 1862.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—By George, Pamela, I begin to fear that I have invoked a Spirit of some kind or other which I will find some difficulty in laying. I wasn't much terrified by your growing *inclinations*, but when you begin to call *presentiments* to your aid, I confess that I "weaken." Mr. Moffett is right, as I said before—and I am not much afraid of his going wrong. Men are easily dealt with—but when you get the women started, you are in for it, you know. But I have decided on two things, viz: Any of you, or all of you, may live in California, for that is the Garden of Eden reproduced—but you shall never live in Nevada; and secondly, none of you, save Mr. Moffett, shall ever cross the Plains. If you were only going to Pike's Peak, a little matter of 700 miles from St. Jo, you might take the coach, and I wouldn't say a word. But I consider it over 2,000 miles from St. Jo to Carson, and the first 6 or 800 miles is mere Fourth of July, compared to the balance of the route. But Lord bless you, a *man* enjoys every foot of it. If you ever come here or to California, it must be by sea. Mr. Moffett must come by overland *coach*, though, by all means. He would consider it the jolliest little trip he ever took in his life. Either June, July, or August are the proper months to make the journey in. He could not suffer from heat, and three or four heavy army blankets would make the cold nights comfortable. If the coach were full of passengers, two good blankets would probably be sufficient. If he comes, and brings plenty of money, and fails to invest it to his entire satisfaction, I will prophesy no more.

But I will tell you a few things which you wouldn't have found out if I hadn't got myself into this scrape. I expect to return to St. Louis in July—per steamer. I don't say that I *will* return then, or that I shall *be able*



to do it—but I *expect to*—you bet. I came down here from Humboldt, in order to look after our Esmeralda interests, and my sore-backed horse and the bad roads have prevented me from making the journey. Yesterday one of my old Esmeralda friends, Bob Howland, arrived here, and I have had a talk with him. He owns with me in the “Horatio and Derby” ledge. He says our tunnel is in 52 feet, and a small stream of water has been struck, which bids fair to become a “big thing” by the time the ledge is reached—sufficient to supply a mill. Now, if you knew anything of the value of water, here, you would perceive at a glance that if the water should amount to 50 or 100 inches, *we* wouldn’t care whether school kept or not. If the ledge should prove to be worthless, we’d *sell the water* for money enough to give us quite a lift. But you see, the ledge *will not* prove to be worthless. We have located, near by, a fine site for a mill; and when we strike the ledge, you know, we’ll have a mill-site, water power, and pay-rock, all handy. *Then* we shan’t care whether we have capital or not. Mill-folks will build us a mill, and wait for their pay. If nothing goes wrong, we’ll strike the ledge in June—and if we do, I’ll be home in July, you know.

Pamela, don’t you know that undemonstrated human calculations won’t do to bet on? Don’t you know that I have only *talked*, as yet, but proved nothing? Don’t you know that I have expended money in this country but have made none myself? Don’t you know that I have never held in my hands a gold or silver bar that belonged to me? Don’t you know that it’s all talk and no cider so far? Don’t you know that people who always feel jolly, no matter where they are or what happens to them—who have the organ of hope preposterously developed—who are endowed with an uncongealable sanguine temperament—who never feel concerned about the price of corn—and who cannot, by any possibility, discover any but the *bright* side of a picture—are very apt to go to

extremes, and exaggerate with 40-horse microscopic power ? Of course I never tried to raise these suspicions in your mind, but then your knowledge of the fact that some people's poor frail human nature is a sort of crazy institution anyhow, ought to have suggested them to you. Now, if I hadn't thoughtlessly got you into the notion of coming out here, and thereby got myself into a scrape, I wouldn't have given you that highly-coloured paragraph about the mill, etc., because, you know, if that pretty little picture should fail, and wash out, and go the Devil generally, it wouldn't cost me the loss of an hour's sleep, but you fellows would be so much distressed on my account as I could possibly be if "circumstances beyond my control" were to prevent my being present at my own funeral. But—but—

"In the bright lexicon of youth,  
There's no such word as Fail—"

and I'll prove it

And look here. I came near forgetting it. Don't you say a word to me about "trains" across the plains. Because I am down on that arrangement. That sort of thing is "played out," you know. The Overland Coach or the Mail Steamer is the thing.

You want to know something about the route between California and Nevada Territory ? Suppose you take my word for it, that it is exceedingly jolly. Or take, for a winter view, J. Ross Brown's picture, in Harper's Monthly, of pack mules tumbling fifteen hundred feet down the side of a mountain. Why bless you, there's *scenery* on that route. You can stand on some of those noble peaks and see Jerusalem and the Holy Land. And you can start a boulder, and send it tearing up the earth and crashing over trees—down—down—down—to the very devil, Madam. And you would probably stand up there and look, and stare and wonder at the magnificence spread out before you till you starved to death, if let alone. But you should take someone along to keep you moving. . . .

Since we have been here there has not been a fire—although the houses are built of wood. They “holler” fire sometimes, though, but I am always too late to see the smoke before the fire is out, if they ever have any. Now they raised a yell here in front of the office a moment ago. I put away my papers, and locked up everything of value, and changed my boots, and pulled off my coat, and went and got a bucket of water, and came back to see what the matter was, remarking to myself, “I guess I’ll be on hand *this* time, any way.” But I met a friend on the pavement, and he said, “Where you been? Fire’s out half an hour ago.”

Ma says Axtele was above “suspition”—but I have searched through Webster’s Unabridged, and can’t find the word. However, it’s of no consequence—I hope he got down safely. I knew Axtele and his wife as well as I know Dan Haines. Mrs. A. once tried to embarrass me in the presence of company by asking me to name her baby, when she was well aware that I didn’t know the sex of that Phenomenon. But I told her to call it Frances, and spell it to suit herself. That was about nine years ago, and Axtele had no property, and could hardly support his family by his earnings. He was a pious cuss, though. Member of Margaret Sexton’s Church.

And Ma says “it looks like a man can’t hold public office and be honest.” Why, certainly not, Madam. A man *can’t* hold public office and be honest. Lord bless you, it is a common practice with Orion to go about town stealing little things that happen to be lying around loose. And I don’t remember having heard him speak the truth since we have been in Nevada. He even tries to prevail upon *me* to do these things, Ma, but I wasn’t brought up in that way, you know. You showed the public what *you* could do in that line when you raised me, Madam. But then you ought to have raised me first, so that Orion could have had the benefit of my example. Do you know that he stole all the stamps out of an 8-stamp

quartz mill one night, and brought them home under his over-coat and hid them in the back room ?

Yrs. etc.,

SAM.

A little later he had headed for the Esmeralda Hills. Some time in February he was established there in a camp with a young man by the name of Horatio Phillips (Raish). Later he camped with Bob Howland, who, as City Marshal of Aurora, became known as the most fearless man in the Territory, and, still later, with Calvin H. Higbie (Cal), to whom *Roughing It* would one day be dedicated. His own funds were exhausted by this time, and Orion, with his rather slender salary, became the financial partner of the firm.

There is too much of a sameness in the letters of this period to use all of them. There are always new claims, and work done, apparently without system or continuance, hoping to uncover sudden boundless affluence.

In the next letter and the one following it we get a hint of an episode, or rather of two incidents which he *combined* into an episode in *Roughing It*. The story as told in that book is an account of what might have happened, rather than history. There was never really any money in the "blind lead" of the Wide West claim, except that which was sunk in it by unfortunate investors. Only extracts from these letters are given. The other portions are irrelevant and of slight value.

*Extract from a letter to Orion Clemens, in Carson City :*

1862.

Two or three of the old "Salina" company entered our hole on the Monitor yesterday morning, before our men got there, and took possession, armed with revolvers. And according to the d—d laws of this forever d—d country, nothing but the District Court (and there ain't any) can touch the matter, unless it assumes the shape of an infernal humbug which they call "forcible entry and detainer," and in order to bring that about, you must compel the jumpers to use personal violence toward you ! We went up and demanded possession, and they refused. Said they were in the hole, armed and meant to die for it, if necessary.

I got in with them, and again demanded possession. They said I might stay in it as long as I pleased, and work but they would do the same. I asked one of our company to take my place in the hole, while I went to consult a lawyer. He did so. The lawyer said it was no go. They must offer some "force."

Our boys will try to be there first in the morning—in which case they may get possession and keep it. *Now* you understand the shooting scrape in which Gebhart was killed the other day. The Clemens Company—all of us—hate to resort to arms in this matter, and it will not be done until it becomes a forced hand—but I think that will be the end of it, never-the-less.

Sometimes, during idle days in the camp, the miner had followed old literary impulses and written an occasional burlesque sketch, which he had signed "Josh," and sent to the *Territorial Enterprise*, at Virginia City. The rough, vigorous humour of these had attracted some attention, and Orion, pleased with any measure of success that might come to his brother, had allowed the authorship of them to become known. When, in July, the financial situation became desperate, the Esmeralda miner was moved to turn to literature for relief.

*To Orion Clemens, in Carson City :*

Esmeralda, July 23rd, 1862.

MY DEAR BRO.,—No, I don't own a foot in the "Johnson" ledge—I will tell the story some day in a more intelligible manner than Tom has told it. You needn't take the trouble to deny Tom's version, though. I own 25 feet (1-16) of the 1st east ex. on it—and Johnson himself has contracted to find the ledge for 100 feet. Contract signed yesterday. But as the ledge will be difficult to find he is allowed six months to find it in. An eighteenth of the Ophir was a fortune to John D. Winters—and the Ophir can't beat the Johnson any. . . .

My debts are greater than I thought for; I bought

\$25 worth of clothing, and sent \$25 to Higbie, in the cement diggings. I owe about \$45 or \$50, and have got about \$45 in my pocket. But how in the h—l I am going to live on something over \$100 until October or November, is singular. The fact is, I must have something to do, and that *shortly*, too. . . .

Now write to the Sacramento Union folks, or to Marsh, and tell them I'll write as many letters a week as they want, for \$10 a week—my board must be paid. Tell them I have corresponded with the N. Orleans Crescent, and other papers—and the Enterprise. California is full of people who have interests here, and it's d—d seldom they hear from this country. I can't write a specimen letter—now, at any rate—I'd rather undertake to write a Greek poem. Tell 'em the mail and express leave three times a week, and it costs from 25 to 50 cents to send letters by the blasted express. If they want letters from here, who'll run from morning till night collecting materials cheaper? I'll write a short letter twice a week, for the present, for the "Age," for \$5 per week. Now it has been a long time since I couldn't make my own living, and it shall be a long time before I loaf another year. . . .

If I get the other 25 feet in the Johnson ex., I shan't care a d—n. I'll be willing to curse awhile and wait. And if I can't move the bowels of those hills this fall, I will come up and clerk for you until I get money enough to go over the mountains for the winter.

Yr. Bro.

SAM.

The *Territorial Enterprise* at Virginia City was at this time owned by Joseph T. Goodman, who had bought it on the eve of the great Comstock silver-mining boom, and from a struggling, starving sheet had converted it into one of the most important—certainly the most picturesque—papers on the coast. The sketches which the Esmeralda miner had written over the name of "Josh" fitted into it exactly, and when a young man named

Barstow, in the business office, urged Goodman to invite "Josh" to join their staff, the *Enterprise* owner readily fell in with the idea. Among a lot of mining matters of no special interest, Clemens, July 30th, wrote his brother: "Barstow has offered me the post as local reporter for the *Enterprise* at \$25 a week, and I have written him that I will let him know next mail, if possible."

It was about the end of August (1862) when the miner finally abandoned the struggle, and with his pack on his shoulders walked the one hundred and thirty miles over the mountains to Virginia City, arriving dusty, lame, and travel-stained to claim at last his rightful inheritance. At the *Enterprise* office he was welcomed, and in a brief time entered into his own. Goodman, the proprietor, himself a man of great ability, had surrounded himself with a group of gay-hearted fellows, whose fresh, wild way of writing delighted the Comstock pioneers far more than any sober presentation of mere news. Samuel Clemens fitted exactly into this group. By the end of the year he had become a leader of it. When he asked to be allowed to report the coming Carson legislature, Goodman consented, realizing that while Clemens knew nothing of parliamentary procedure, he would at least make the letters picturesque.

It was in the midst of this work that he adopted the name which he was to make famous throughout the world. "Mark Twain" was first signed to a Carson letter, February 2, 1863, and from that time was attached to all of Samuel Clemens's work. The letters had already been widely copied, and the name now which gave them personality quickly obtained vogue. It was attached to himself as well as to the letters; heretofore he had been called Sam or Clemens, now he became almost universally Mark Twain and Mark.

This early period of Mark Twain's journalism is full of delicious history, but we are permitted here to retell only such of it as will supply connection to the infrequent letters. He wrote home briefly in February, but the letter contained nothing worth preserving. Then two months later he gives us at least a hint of his employment.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:*

Virginia, April 11, 1863.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—It is very late at night, and I am writing in my room, which is not quite as large or as nice as the one I had at home. My board,

washing and lodging cost me seventy-five dollars a month.

I have just received your letter, Ma, from Carson—the one in which you doubt my veracity about the statements I made in a letter to you. That's right. I don't recollect what the statements were, but I suppose they were mining statistics. I have just finished writing up my report for the morning paper, and giving the Unreliable a column of advice about how to conduct himself in church, and now I will tell you a few more lies, while my hand is in. For instance, some of the boys made me a present of fifty feet in the East India G. and S. M. Company ten days ago. I was offered ninety-five dollars a foot for it, yesterday, in gold. *I refused it*—not because I think the claim is worth a cent for I *don't* but because I had a curiosity to see how high it would go, before people find out how worthless it is. Besides, what if one mining claim *does* fool me? I have got plenty more. I am not in a particular hurry to get rich. I suppose I couldn't well help getting rich here some time or other, whether I wanted to or not. You folks do not believe in Nevada, and I am glad you don't. Just keep on thinking so. . . .

The "Unreliable" of this letter was a rival reporter on whom Mark Twain had conferred this name during the legislative session. His real name was Rice, and he had undertaken to criticize Clemens's reports. The brisk reply that Rice's letters concealed with a show of parliamentary knowledge a "festering mass of misstatements the author of whom should be properly termed the 'Unreliable,'" fixed that name upon him for life. This burlesque warfare delighted the frontier and it did not interfere with friendship. Clemens and Rice were constant associates, though continually firing squibs at each other in their respective papers—a form of personal journalism much in vogue on the Comstock.

In the next letter we find these two journalistic "blades" enjoying themselves together in the coast metropolis. This letter is labelled "No. 2," meaning, probably, the second from San Francisco, but No. 1 has disappeared, and even No. 2 is incomplete.



*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

No. 2—\$20.00 Enclosed

Lick House, S. F., June 1, '63.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—The Unreliable and myself are still here, and still enjoying ourselves. I suppose I know at least a thousand people here—a great many of them citizens of San Francisco, but the majority belonging in Washoe—and when I go down Montgomery street, shaking hands with Tom, Dick and Harry, it is just like being in Main street in Hannibal and meeting the old familiar faces. I *do hate* to go back to Washoe. We fag ourselves completely out every day, and go to sleep without rocking, every night. We dine out and we lunch out, and we eat, drink and are happy—as it were. After breakfast, I don't often see the hotel again until midnight—or after. I am going to the Dickens mighty fast. I know a regular village of families here in the house, but I never have time to call on them. Thunder! we'll know a little more about this town, before we leave, than some of the people who live in it. We take trips across the Bay to Oakland, and down to San Leandro, and Alameda, and those places, and we go out to the Willows, and Hayes Park, and Fort Point, and up to Benicia; and yesterday we were invited out on a yachting excursion, and had a sail in the fastest yacht on the Pacific Coast. Rice says: "Oh, no—*we* are not having any fun, Mark—Oh, no, I reckon not—it's somebody else—it's probably the 'gentleman in the wagon'!" (popular slang phrase.) When I invite Rice to the Lick House to dinner, the proprietors send us champagne and claret, and then we *do* put on the most disgusting airs. Rice says our calibre is too light—we can't stand it to be noticed!

I rode down with a gentleman to the Ocean House, the other day, to see the sea horses, and also to listen to the roar of the surf, and watch the ships drifting about, here, and there, and far away at sea. When I stood on the

beach and let the surf wet my feet, I recollected doing the same thing on the shores of the Atlantic—and then I had a proper appreciation of the vastness of this country—for I had travelled from ocean to ocean across it.

(Remainder missing.)

Not far from Virginia City there are some warm springs that constantly send up jets of steam through fissures in the mountain side. The place was a health resort, and Clemens, always subject to bronchial colds, now and again retired there for a cure.

A letter written in the late summer—a gay, youthful document—belongs to one of these periods of convalescence.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

Steamboat Springs, August 19, '63.

No. 12—\$20 enclosed.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—Ma, you have given my vanity a deadly thrust. Behold, I am prone to boast of having the widest reputation, as a local editor, of any man on the Pacific coast, and you gravely come forward and tell me “if I work hard and attend closely to my business, I may aspire to a place on a big San Francisco daily, some day.” There’s a comment on human vanity for you! Why, blast it, I was under the impression that I could get such a situation as that any time I asked for it. But I don’t want it. No paper in the United States can afford to pay me what my place on the “Enterprise” is worth. If I were not naturally a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing vagabond, I could make it pay me \$20,000 a year. But I don’t suppose I shall ever be any account. I lead an easy life, though, and I don’t care a cent whether school keeps or not. Everybody knows me, and I fare like a prince wherever I go, be it on this side of the mountains or the other. And I am proud to say I am the most conceited ass in the Territory.

You think that picture looks old? Well, I can’t help it—in reality I am not as old as I was when I was eighteen.

I took a desperate cold more than a week ago, and I seduced Wilson (a Missouri boy, reporter of the Daily Union), from his labours, and we went over to Lake Bigler. But I failed to cure my cold. I found the "Lake House" crowded with the wealth and fashion of Virginia, and I could not resist the temptation to take a hand in all the fun going. Those Virginians—men and women both—are a stirring set, and I found if I went with them on all their eternal excursions, I should bring the consumption home with me—so I left, day before yesterday, and came back into the Territory again. A lot of them had purchased a site for a town on the Lake shore, and they gave me a lot. When you come out, I'll build you a house on it. The Lake seems more supernaturally beautiful now, than ever. It is the masterpiece of the Creation.

The hotel here at the Springs is not so much crowded as usual, and I am having a very comfortable time of it. The hot, white steam puffs up out of fissures in the earth like the jets that come from a steam-boat's 'scape pipes, and it makes a boiling, surging noise like a steam-boat, too—hence the name. We put eggs in a handkerchief and dip them in the springs—they "soft boil" in 2 minutes, and boil as hard as a rock in 4 minutes. These fissures extend more than a quarter of a mile, and the long line of steam columns looks very pretty. A large bath house is built over one of the springs, and we go in it and steam ourselves as long as we can stand it, and then come out and take a cold shower bath. You get baths, board and lodging, all for \$25 a week—cheaper than living in Virginia without baths. . . .

Yrs aft

MARK.

It was now the autumn of 1863. Mark Twain was twenty-eight years old. On the Coast he had established a reputation as a gaily original newspaper writer. Thus far, however, he had absolutely no literary standing, nor is there any evidence that he had literary ambitions; his work was unformed and uncultivated.

He was busy reporting the Legislature at Carson City and responding to social demands. From having been a scarcely considered unit during the early days of his arrival in Carson Mark Twain had attained a high degree of importance in the little Nevada capital. In the Legislature he was a power; as correspondent for the *Enterprise* he was feared and respected as well as admired. His humour, his satire, and his fearlessness were dreaded weapons.

Also, he was of extraordinary popularity. Orion's wife, with her little daughter, Jennie, had come out from the States. The Governor of Nevada had no household in Carson City, and was generally absent. Orion Clemens reigned in his stead, and indeed was usually addressed as "Governor" Clemens. His home became the social centre of the capital, and his brilliant brother its chief ornament. From the roughest of miners of a year before he had become, once more, almost a dandy in dress, and no occasion was complete without him. When the two Houses of the Legislature assembled, in January, 1864, a burlesque Third House was organized, and proposed to hold a session, as a church benefit. After very brief consideration it was decided to select Mark Twain to preside at this Third House, assembly under the title of "Governor," and a letter of invitation was addressed to him. His reply to it follows:

*To S. Pixley and G. A. Sears, Trustees:*

Carson City, January 23, 1864.

GENTLEMEN,—Certainly. If the public can find anything in a grave state paper worth paying a dollar for, I am willing that they should pay that amount, or any other; and although I am not a very dusty Christian myself, I take an absorbing interest in religious affairs, and would willingly inflict my annual message upon the Church itself if it might derive benefit thereby. You can charge what you please; I promise the public no amusement, but I do promise a reasonable amount of instruction. I am responsible to the Third House only, and I hope to be permitted to make it exceedingly warm for that body, without caring whether the sympathies of the public and the Church be enlisted in their favour, and against myself or not.

Respectfully,

MARK TWAIN.

In 1864 Clemens was in San Francisco, working on the *Call*, and contributing literary articles to the *Californian*, of which Bret Harte, unknown to fame, was editor. Harte had his office just above the rooms of the *Call*, and he and Clemens were good friends.

Relations with the *Call* ceased before the end of the year, though not in the manner described in *Roughing It*. It had been an important year; the jumping frog story, published in New York, had been reprinted East and West, and laughed over in at least a million homes.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

San Francisco, Jan. 20, 1866

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I do not know what to write; my life is so uneventful. I wish I was back there piloting up and down the river again. Verily, all is vanity and little worth—save piloting.

To think that, after writing many an article a man might be excused for thinking tolerably good, those New York people should single out a villainous backwoods sketch to compliment me on!—"Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"—a squib which would never have been written but to please Artemus Ward, and then it reached New York too late to appear in his book.

But no matter. His book was a wretchedly poor one, generally speaking, and it could be no credit to either of us to appear between its covers.

This paragraph is from the New York correspondence of the San Francisco *Alta* :

(Clipping pasted in.)

"Mark Twain's story in the *Saturday Press* of November 18th, called 'Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog,' has set all New York in a roar, and he may be said to have made his mark. I have been asked fifty times about it and its author, and the papers are copying it far and near. It is voted the best thing of the day. Cannot the *Californian* afford to keep Mark all to itself? It should

not let him scintillate so widely without first being filtered through the California press."

The New York publishing house of Carleton & Co. gave the sketch to the *Saturday Press* when they found it was too late for the book.

Though I am generally placed at the head of my breed of scribblers in this part of the country, the place properly belongs to Bret Harte, I think, though he denies it, along with the rest. He wants me to club a lot of old sketches together with a lot of his, and publish a book. I wouldn't do it, only he agrees to take all the trouble. But I want to know whether we are going to make anything out of it, first. However, he has written to a New York publisher, and if we are offered a bargain that will pay for a month's labour we will go to work and prepare the volume for the press.

Yours affy,

SAM.

Bret Harte and Clemens had by this time quit the *Californian*, expecting to contribute to Eastern periodicals. Clemens, however, was not yet through with Coast journalism. There was much interest just at this time in the Sandwich Islands, and he was selected by the foremost Sacramento paper to spy out the islands and report aspects and conditions there.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, April 3, 1866.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I have been here two or three weeks, and like the beautiful tropical climate better and better. I have ridden on horseback all over this island (Oahu) in the meantime, and have visited all the ancient battle-fields and other places of interest. I have got a lot of human bones which I took from one of these battle-fields—I guess I will bring you some of them. I went with the American Minister and took dinner this



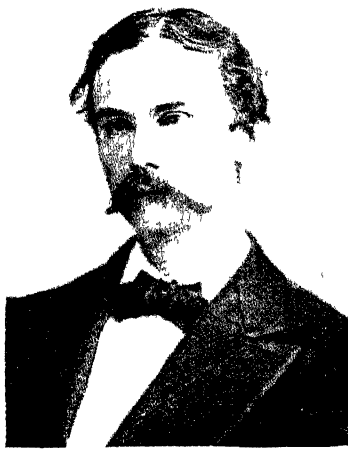
BRET HARTE



JOSH BILLINGS



ARTEMUS WARD.



JOHN HAY

A GROUP OF MARK TWAIN'S EARLY FRIENDS





evening with the King's Grand Chamberlain, who is related to the royal family, and although darker than a mulatto, he has an excellent English education and in manners is an accomplished gentleman. The dinner was as ceremonious as any I ever attended in California—five regular courses, and five kinds of wine and one brandy. He is to call for me in the morning with his carriage, and we will visit the King at the palace—both are good Masons—the King is a Royal Arch Mason. After dinner tonight they called in the “singing girls,” and we had some beautiful music, sung in the native tongue.

The steamer I came here in sails tomorrow, and as soon as she is gone I shall sail for the other islands of the group and visit the great volcano—the grand wonder of the world. Be gone two months.

Yrs.

SAM.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

Honolulu, Sandwich Islands,

June 21, 1866.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I have just got back from a hard trip through the Island of Hawaii, begun on the 26th of May and finished on the 18th of June—only six or seven days at sea—all the balance horse-back, and the hardest mountain road in the world. I staid at the volcano about a week and witnessed the greatest eruption that has occurred for years. I lived well there. They charge \$4 a day for board, and a dollar or two extra for guides and horses. I had a pretty good time. They didn't charge me anything. I have got back sick—went to bed as soon as I arrived here—shall not be strong again for several days yet. I rushed too fast. I ought to have taken five or six weeks on that trip.

A week hence I start for the Island of Kauai, to be gone three weeks and *then* I go back to California.

The Crown Princess is dead and thousands of natives cry and wail and dance and dance for the dead, around the King's Palace all night and every night. They will keep it up for a month and then she will be buried.

Hon. Anson Burlingame, U. S. Minister to China, and Gen. Van Valkenburgh, Minister to Japan, with their families and suites, have just arrived here *en route*. They were going to do me the honor to call on me this morning, and that accounts for my being out of bed now. You know what condition my room is always in when you are not around—so I climbed out of bed and dressed and shaved pretty quick and went up to the residence of the American Minister and called on *them*. Mr. Burlingame told me a good deal about Hon. Jere Clemens and that Virginia Clemens who was wounded in a duel. He was in Congress years with both of them. Mr. B. sent for his son, to introduce him—said he could tell that frog story of mine as well as anybody. I told him I was glad to hear it for I never tried to tell it myself without making a botch of it. At his request I have loaned Mr. Burlingame pretty much everything I ever wrote. I guess he will be an almighty wise man by the time he wades through that lot.

If the New United States Minister to the Sandwich Islands (Hon. Edwin McCook), were only here now, so that I could get his views on this new condition of Sandwich Island politics, I would sail for California at once. But he will not arrive for two weeks yet and so I am going to spend that interval on the island of Kauai.

I stopped three days with Hon. Mr. Cony, Deputy Marshal of the Kingdom, at Hilo, Hawaii, last week and by a funny circumstance he knew everybody that I ever knew in Hannibal and Palmyra. We used to sit up all night talking and then sleep all day. He lives like a Prince. Confound that Island! I had a streak of fat and a streak of lean all over it—got lost several times and

had to sleep in huts with the natives and live like a dog. Of course I couldn't speak fifty words of the language, Take it altogether, though, it was a mighty hard trip.

Yours Affect.

SAM.

Burlingame and Van Valkenburgh were on their way to their posts, and their coming to the islands just at this time proved a most important circumstance to Mark Twain. We shall come to this presently, in a summary of the newspaper letters written to the *Union*. June 27th he wrote to his mother and sister a letter, only a fragment of which survives, in which he tells of the arrival in Honolulu of the survivors of the ship *Hornet*, burned on the line, and of his securing the first news report of the lost vessel.

*Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in  
St. Louis :*

Honolulu, June 27, 1866

. . . with a gill of water a day to each man. I got the whole story from the third mate and two of the sailors. If my account gets to the Sacramento Union first, it will be *published* first all over the United States, France, England, Russia and Germany—all over the world, I may say. You will see it. Mr. Burlingame went with me all the time, and helped me question the men—throwing away invitations to dinner with the princes and foreign dignitaries, and neglecting all sorts of things to accommodate me. You know how I appreciate that kind of thing—especially from *such* a man, who is acknowledged to have no superior in the diplomatic circles of the world, and obtained from China concessions in favor of America which were refused to Sir Frederick Bruce and Envoys of France and Russia until procured for them by Burlingame himself—which service was duly acknowledged by those dignitaries. He hunted me up as soon as he came here, and has done me a hundred favors since, and says if I will come to China in the first trip of the great

mail steamer next January and make his house in Pekin my home, he will afford me facilities that few men can have there for seeing and learning. He will give me letters to the chiefs of the great Mail Steamship Company which will be of service to me in this matter. I expect to do all this, but I expect to go to the States first—and from China to the Paris World's Fair.

*Don't show this letter.*

Yours affly

SAM.

P. S. The crown Princess of this Kingdom will be buried tomorrow with great ceremony—after that I sail in two weeks for California.

It was August 13th when he reached San Francisco and wrote in his note-book, "Home again. No—not home again—in prison again, and all the wild sense of freedom gone. City seems so cramped and so dreary with toil and care and business anxieties. God help me, I wish I were at sea again!"

He wished to make a trip around the world, a project that required money. He contemplated making a book of his island letters and experiences, and the acceptance by *Harper's Magazine* of the revised version of the *Hornet Shipwreck* story encouraged this thought.

Friends urged him to embody in a lecture the picturesque aspect of Hawaiian life. The thought frightened him, but it also appealed to him strongly. He believed he could entertain an audience, once he got started on the right track. As Governor of the Third House at Carson City he had kept the audience in hand. Men in whom he had the utmost confidence insisted that he should follow up the lecture idea and engage the largest house in the city for his purpose. The possibility of failure appalled him, but he finally agreed to the plan.

In *Roughing It*, and elsewhere, has been told the story of this venture—the tale of its splendid success. He was no longer concerned, now, as to his immediate future. His audience laughed and shouted. He was learning the flavour of real success and exulting in it. With Dennis McCarthy, formerly one of the partners in the *Enterprise*, as manager, he made a tour of California and Nevada.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and others, in St. Louis :*

Virginia City, Nov. 1, 1866

ALL THE FOLKS, AFFECTIONATE GREETING,—You know the flush times are past, and it has long been impossible to more than half fill the Theatre here, with any sort of attraction, but they filled it for me, night before last—full—dollar all over the house. . . .

I have lectured in San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, Grass Valley, Nevada, You Bet, Red Dog and Virginia. I am going to talk in Carson, Gold Hill, Silver City, Dayton, Washoe, San Francisco again, and again here if I have time to re-hash the lecture.

Then I am bound for New York—lecture on the Steamer, maybe.

I'll leave toward 1st December—but I'll telegraph you.

Love to all.

Yrs.

MARK.

His lecture tour continued from October until December, a period of picturesque incident.

Arriving in New York, after an adventurous voyage, he met a number of old Californians—men who believed in him—and urged him to lecture. He also received offers of newspaper engagements, and from Charles Henry Webb, who had published the *Californian*, which Bret Harte had edited, came the proposal to collect his published sketches, including the Jumping Frog story, in book form. Webb finally declared, after vainly approaching several publishers, that he would publish the book himself, and Clemens, after a few weeks of New York, joined his mother and family in St. Louis and gave himself up to a considerable period of visiting, lecturing meantime in both Hannibal and Keokuk.

Fate had great matters in preparation for him. The Quaker City Mediterranean excursion, the first great ocean picnic, was announced that spring, and Mark Twain realized that it offered a possible opportunity for him to see something of the world. He wrote at once to the proprietors of the *Alta-California* and proposed that they send him as their correspondent. To his delight his proposition was accepted, the *Alta* agreeing to the twelve hundred dollars passage money, and twenty dollars each for letters.

The *Quaker City* was not to sail until the 8th of June, but the *Alta* wished some preliminary letters from New York. Furthermore, Webb had the Frog book in press, and would issue it May 1st. Clemens, therefore, returned to New York in April, and now once more being urged by the Californians to lecture, he did not refuse. Frank Fuller, formerly Governor of Utah, took the matter in hand and engaged Cooper Union for the venture. He timed it for May 6th, which would be a few days after the appearance of Webb's book. Clemens was even more frightened at the prospect of this lecture than he had been in San Francisco, and with more reason, for in New York his friends were not many, and competition for public favour was very great.

*To Bret Harte, in San Francisco :*

Westminster Hotel, May 1, 1867.

DEAR BRET,—I take my pen in hand to inform you that I am well and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same God's blessing.

The book is out, and is handsome. It is full of damnable errors of grammar and deadly inconsistencies of spelling in the Frog sketch because I was away and did not read the proofs ; but be a friend and say nothing about these things. When my hurry is over, I will send you an autograph copy to pisen the children with.

I am to lecture in Cooper Institute next Monday night. Pray for me.

We sail for the Holy Land June 8. Try to write me (to this hotel,) and it will be forwarded to Paris, where we remain 10 or 15 days.

Regards and best wishes to Mrs. Bret and the family.

Truly Yr Friend

MARK.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Westminster Hotel, May 1, 1867.

DEAR FOLKS,—Don't expect me to write for a while. My hands are full of business on account of my lecture for

the 6th inst., and everything looks shady, at least, if not dark. I have got a good agent—but now after we have hired Cooper Institute and gone to an expense in one way or another of \$500, it comes out that I have got to play against Speaker Colfax at Irving Hall, Ristori, and also the double troupe of Japanese Jugglers, the latter opening at the great Academy of Music—and with all this against me I have taken the largest house in New York and cannot back water. Let her slide! If nobody else cares I don't.

I'll send the book soon. I am awfully hurried now, but not worried.

Yrs. SAM.

The Cooper Union lecture proved a failure, and a success. When it became evident to Fuller that the venture was not going to pay, he sent out a flood of complimentaries to the school-teachers of New York City and the surrounding districts. No one seems to have declined them. Clemens lectured to a jammed house and acquired much reputation.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Westminster Hotel, New York, June 1, 1867.

DEAR FOLKS,—I know I ought to write oftener (just got your last,) and more fully, but I cannot overcome my repugnance to telling what I am doing or what I expect to do or propose to do. Then, what have I left to write about? Manifestly nothing.

It isn't any use for me to talk about the voyage, because I can have no faith in that voyage till the ship is under way. How do I know she will ever sail? My passage is paid, and if the ship sails, I sail in her—but I make no calculations, have bought no cigars, no sea-going clothing—have made no preparation whatever—shall not pack my trunk till the morning we sail. Yet my hands are full of what I am going to do the day *before* we sail—and what isn't done that day will go undone.

All I do know or feel, is, that I am wild with impatience to move—move—*move*! Half a dozen times I have wished

I had sailed long ago in some ship that wasn't going to keep me chained here to chafe for lagging ages while she got ready to go. Curse the endless delays! They always kill me—they make me neglect every duty and then I have a conscience that tears me like a wild beast. I wish I never had to stop anywhere a month. I do more mean things, the moment I get a chance to fold my hands and sit down than ever I can get forgiveness for. . . .

I am resigned to Rev. Mr. Hutchinson's or anybody else's supervision. I don't mind it. I am fixed. I have got a splendid, immoral, tobacco-smoking, wine-drinking, godless room-mate who is as good and true and right-minded a man as ever lived—a man whose blameless conduct and example will always be an eloquent sermon to all who shall come within their influence. But send on the professional preachers—there are none I like better to converse with. If they're not narrow minded and bigoted they make good companions.

I asked them to send the N. Y. Weekly to you—no charge. I am not going to write for it. Like all other papers that pay one splendidly it circulates among stupid people and the *canaille*. I have made no arrangement with any New York paper—I will see about that Monday or Tuesday.

Love to all

Good bye,

Yrs affy

SAM.

Mark Twain, now at sea, was writing many letters; not personal letters, but those unique descriptive relations of travel which would make him his first great fame—those fresh first impressions preserved to us now as chapters of *The Innocents Abroad*.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Yalta, Russia, Aug. 25, 1867.

DEAR FOLKS,—We have been representing the United States all we knew how today. We went to Sebastopol,



after we got tired of Constantinople (got your letter there, and one at Naples,) and there the Commandant and the whole town came aboard and were as jolly and sociable as old friends. They said the Emperor of Russia was at Yalta, 30 miles or 40 away, and urged us to go there with the ship and visit him—promised us a cordial welcome. They insisted on sending a telegram to the Emperor, and also a courier overland to announce our coming. But we knew that a great English Excursion party, and also the Viceroy of Egypt, in his splendid yacht, had been refused an audience within the last fortnight, so we thought it not safe to try it. They said, no difference—the Emperor would hardly visit our ship, because that would be a most extraordinary favor, and one which he uniformly refuses to accord under any circumstances, but he would certainly receive us at his palace. We still declined. But we had to go to Odessa, 250 miles away, and there the Governor General urged us, and sent a telegram to the Emperor, which we hardly expected to be answered, but it was, and promptly. So we sailed back to Yalta.

We all went to the palace at noon, today, (3 miles) in carriages and on horses sent by the Emperor, and we had a jolly time. Instead of the usual formal audience of 15 minutes, we staid 4 hours and were made a good deal more at home than we could have been in a New York drawing-room. The whole tribe turned out to receive our party—Emperor, Empress, the oldest daughter (Grand-Duchess Marie, a pretty girl of 14,) a little Grand Duke, her brother, and a platoon of Admirals, Princes, Peers of the Empire, etc., and in a little while an aide-de-camp arrived with a request from the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's brother, that we would visit his palace and breakfast with him. The Emperor also invited us, on behalf of his absent eldest son and heir (aged 22), to visit *his* palace and consider it a visit to him. They all talk English and they were all very neatly but very plainly dressed. You all dress a good deal finer

than they were dressed. The Emperor and his family threw off all reserve and showed us all over the palace themselves. It is very rich and very elegant, but in no way gaudy.

I had been appointed chairman of a committee to draught an address to the Emperor in behalf of the passengers, and as I fully expected, and as they fully intended, I had to write the address myself. I didn't mind it, because I have no modesty and would as soon write to an Emperor as to anybody else—but considering that there were 5 on the committee I thought they might have contributed *one* paragraph among them, anyway. They wanted me to *read* it to him, too, but I declined that honor—not because I hadn't cheek enough (and some to spare,) but because our Consul at Odessa was along, and also the Secretary of our Legation at St. Petersburg, and of course one of those *ought* to read it. The Emperor accepted the address—it was his business to do it—and so many others have praised it warmly that I begin to imagine it must be a wonderful sort of document and herewith send you the original draught of it to be put into alcohol and preserved forever like a curious reptile.

They live right well at the Grand Duke Michael's—their breakfasts are not gorgeous but very excellent—and if Mike were to say the word I would go there and breakfast with him tomorrow.

Yr aff

SAM.

P. S. [Written across the face of the last page.] They had told us it would be polite to invite the Emperor to visit the ship, though he would not be likely to do it. But he didn't give us a chance—he has requested permission to come on board with his family and all his relations tomorrow and take a sail, in case it is calm weather. I can entertain them. My hand is in, now, and if you want any more Emperors fêted in style, trot them out.

U. S. Consul's Office,  
Beirut, Syria, Sept. 11 (1867)

DEAR FOLKS,—We are here, eight of us, making a contract with a dragoman to take us to Baalbek, then to Damascus, Nazareth, &c., then to Lake Genassareth (Sea of Tiberias,) then South through all the celebrated Scriptural localities to Jerusalem—then to the Dead Sea, the Cave of Macpelah and up to Joppa where the ship will be. We shall be in the saddle three weeks—we have horses, tents, provisions, arms, a dragoman and two other servants, and we pay five dollars a day apiece, in gold.

Love to all, yrs.

SAM.

We leave tonight, at two o'clock in the morning.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Cagliari, Sardinia, Oct. 12, 1867.

DEAR FOLKS,—We have just dropped anchor before this handsome city and——

Algiers, Africa, Oct. 15.

They would not let us land at Cagliari on account of cholera. Nothing to write.

Malaga, Spain, Oct. 17.

The Captain and I are ashore here under guard, waiting to know whether they will let the ship anchor or not. Quarantine regulations are very strict here on all vessels coming from Egypt. I am a little anxious because I want to go inland to Granada and see the Alhambra. I can go on down by Seville and Cordova, and be picked up at Cadiz.

Later : We cannot anchor—must go on. We shall be at Gibraltar before midnight and I think I will go horseback (2 long days) and thence by rail and diligence to

Cadiz. I will not mail this till I see the Gibraltar lights—I begin to think they won't let us in anywhere.

11.30 P. M.—Gibraltar.

At anchor and all right, but they won't let us land till morning—it is a waste of valuable time. We shall reach New York middle of November.

Yours,

SAM.

Cadiz, Oct. 24, 1867.

DEAR FOLKS,—We left Gibraltar at noon and rode to Algeciras, (4 hours) thus dodging the quarantine, took dinner and then rode horseback all night in a swinging trot and at daylight took a caleche (2-wheeled vehicle) and rode 5 hours—then took cars and traveled till twelve at night. That landed us at Seville and we were over the hard part of our trip, and somewhat tired. Since then we have taken things comparatively easy, drifting around from one town to another and attracting a good deal of attention, for I guess strangers do not wander through Andalusia and the other Southern provinces of Spain often. The country is precisely as it was when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were possible characters.

But I see now what the glory of Spain must have been when it was under Moorish domination. No, I will not say that, but then when one is carried away, infatuated, entranced, with the wonders of the Alhambra and the supernatural beauty of the Alcazar, he is apt to overflow with admiration for the splendid intellects that created them.

I cannot write now. I am only dropping a line to let you know I am well. The ship will call for us here tomorrow. We *may* stop at Lisbon, and shall at the Bermudas, and will arrive in New York ten days after this letter gets there.

Yrs.

SAM.

He wrote fifty-three letters to the *Alta-California*, six to the New York *Tribune*, and at least two to the New York *Herald*—more than sixty, all told, of an average length of three to four thousand words each. They made him famous. Arriving in New York, November 19, 1867, Mark Twain found himself no longer unknown to the metropolis, or to any portion of America. Papers East and West had copied his *Alta* and *Tribune* letters and carried his name into every corner of the States and Territories. He had preached a new gospel in travel literature, the gospel of frankness and sincerity that Americans could understand. Also his literary powers had awakened at last. His work was no longer trivial, crude, and showy; it was full of dignity, beauty, and power; his humour was finer, worthier. The difference in quality between the *Quaker City* letters and those written from the Sandwich Islands only a year before can scarcely be measured.

He did not remain in New York, but went down to Washington, where he had arranged for a private secretaryship with Senator William M. Stewart, whom he had known in Nevada. Such a position he believed would make but little demand upon his time, and would afford him an insight into Washington life, which he could make valuable in the shape of newspaper correspondence.

But fate had other plans for him. He presently received the following letter :

*From Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford :*

Office of the American Publishing Company.  
Hartford, Conn, Nov. 21, 1867.

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS Esq.

Tribune Office, New York.

DR. SIR,—We take the liberty to address you this, in place of a letter which we had recently written and was about to forward to you, not knowing your arrival home was expected so soon. We are desirous of obtaining from you a work of some kind, perhaps compiled from your letters from the East, &c., with such interesting additions as may be proper. We are the publishers of A. D. Richardson's works, and flatter ourselves that we can give an author as favorable terms and do as full justice to his productions as any other house in the country. We are

perhaps the oldest subscription house in the country, and have never failed to give a book an immense circulation. We sold about 100,000 copies of Richardson's F. D. & E. (Field, Dungeon and Escape) and are now printing 41,000 of "Beyond the Mississippi," and large orders ahead. If you have any thought of writing a book, or could be induced to do so, we should be pleased to see you, and will do so. Will you do us the favor to reply at once, at your earliest convenience.

Very truly, &c.,

E. BLISS, Jr.

Secty.

Clemens had already the idea of a book in mind and welcomed this proposition.

*To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford :*

Washington, Dec. 2, 1867.

E. BLISS, Jr. Esq.

Sec'y American Publishing Co.—

DEAR SIR,—I only received your favor of Nov. 21st last night at the rooms of the Tribune Bureau here. It was forwarded from the Tribune office, New York, where it had lain eight or ten days. This will be a sufficient apology for the seeming discourtesy of my silence.

I wrote fifty-two (three) letters for the San Francisco "Alta California" during the Quaker City excursion, about half of which number have been printed, thus far. The "Alta" has few exchanges in the East, and I suppose scarcely any of these letters have been copied on this side of the Rocky Mountains. I could weed them of their chief faults of construction and inelegancies of expression and make a volume that would be more acceptable in many respects than any I could now write. When those letters were written my impressions were fresh, but now they have lost that freshness; they were warm then—they are cold, now. I could strike out certain letters, and write new ones wherewith to supply their places. If you think

such a book would suit your purpose, please drop me a line, specifying the size and general style of the volume ; when the matter ought to be ready ; whether it should have pictures in it or not ; and particularly what your terms with me would be, and what amount of money I might possibly make out of it. The latter clause has a degree of importance for me which is almost beyond my own comprehension. But you understand that, of course.

I have other propositions for a book, but have doubted the propriety of interfering with good newspaper engagements, except my way as an author could be demonstrated to be plain before me. But I know Richardson, and learned from him some months ago, something of an idea of the subscription plan of publishing. If that is your plan invariably, it looks safe.

I am on the N. Y. Tribune staff here as an "occasional," among other things, and a note from you addressed to

Very truly &c.

SAM L. CLEMENS,

New York Tribune Bureau, Washington, will find me, without fail.

The exchange of these two letters marked the beginning of one of the most notable publishing connections in American literary history. The book, however, was not begun immediately. Bliss was in poor health and final arrangements were delayed ; it was not until late in January that Clemens went to Hartford and concluded the arrangement.

Meantime, fate had disclosed another matter of even greater importance ; we get the first hint of it in the following letter, though to him its beginning had been earlier—on a day in the blue harbour of Smyrna, when young Charles Langdon, a fellow-passenger on the *Quaker City*, had shown to Mark Twain a miniature of young Langdon's sister at home :

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

224 F. Street, Wash, Jan. 8, 1868.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—And so old Major has been there, has he ? I would like mighty well to see

him. I was a sort of benefactor to him once. I helped to snatch him out when he was about to ride into a Mohammedan Mosque in that queer old Moorish town of Tangier, in Africa. If he had got in, the Moors would have knocked his venerable old head off, for his temerity.

I have just arrived from New York—been there ever since Christmas staying at the house of Dan Slote—my Quaker City room-mate, and having a splendid time. Charley Langdon, Jack Van Nostrand, Dan and I, (all Quaker City night-hawks,) had a blow-out at Dan's house and a lively talk over old times. We went through the Holy Land together, and I just laughed till my sides ached, at some of our reminiscences. It was the unholyest gang that ever cavorted through Palestine, but those are the best boys in the world. We needed Moulton badly. I started to make calls, New Year's Day, but I anchored for the day at the first house I came to—Charlie Langdon's sister was there (beautiful girl,) and Miss Alice Hooker, another beautiful girl, a niece of Henry Ward Beecher's. We sent the old folks home early, with instructions not to send the carriage till midnight, and then I just staid there and worried the life out of those girls. I am going to spend a few days with the Langdons in Elmira, New York, as soon as I get time, and a few days at Mrs. Hooker's in Hartford, Conn., shortly.

Henry Ward Beecher sent for me last Sunday to come over and dine (he lives in Brooklyn, you know), and I went. Harriet Beecher Stowe was there, and Mrs. and Miss Beecher, Mrs. Hooker and my old Quaker City favorite, Emma Beach.

We had a very gay time, if it was Sunday. I expect I told more lies than I have told before in a month.

I went back by invitation, after the evening service, and finished the blow-out, and then staid all night at Mr. Beach's. Henry Ward is a brick.

I found out at 10 o'clock, last night, that I was to lecture tomorrow evening and so you must be aware that I have



been working like sin all night to get a lecture written. I have finished it, I call it "Frozen Truth." It is a little top-heavy, though, because there is more truth in the title than there is in the lecture.

But thunder, I mustn't sit here writing all day, with so much business before me.

Good by, and kind regards to all.

Yrs affy

SAM L. CLEMENS.

Jack Van Nostrand of this letter is "Jack" of the *Innocents*. Emma Beach was the daughter of Moses S. Beach, of the New York *Sun*. Later she became the wife of the well-known painter, Abbot H. Thayer.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

Hartford, Conn. Jan. 24-68.

DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—This is a good week for me. I stopped in the Herald office as I came through New York, to see the boys on the staff, and young James Gordon Bennett asked me to write twice a week, impersonally, for the *Herald*, and said if I would I might have full swing, and (write) about anybody and everybody I wanted to. I said I must have the very fullest possible swing, and he said "all right." I said "It's a contract—" and that settled that matter.

I'll make it a point to write *one* letter a week, anyhow.

But the *best* thing that has happened was here. This great American Publishing Company kept on trying to bargain with me for a book till I thought I would cut the matter short by coming up for a *talk*. I met Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in Brooklyn, and with his usual whole-souled way of dropping his own work to give other people a lift when he gets a chance, he said, "Now, here, you are one of the talented men of the age—nobody is going to deny that—but in matters of business, I don't suppose

you know more than enough to come in when it rains. I'll tell you what to do, and how to do it." And he did.

And I listened well, and then came up here and made a splendid contract for a Quaker City Book of 5 or 600 large pages, with illustrations, the manuscript to be placed in the publishers' hands by the middle of July. My percentage is to be a fifth more than they have ever paid any author, except Horace Greeley. Beecher will be surprised, I guess, when he hears this.

But I had my mind made up to *one* thing—I wasn't going to touch a book unless there was *money* in it, and a good deal of it. I told them so. I had the misfortune to "bust out" one author of standing. They had his manuscript, with the understanding that they would publish his book if they could not get a book from me, (they only publish two books at a time, and so my book and Richardson's *Life of Grant* will fill the bill for next fall and winter)—so that manuscript was sent back to its author today. . . .

The Chicago Tribune wants letters, but I hope and pray I have charged them so much that they will not close the contract. I am gradually getting out of debt, but these trips to New York do cost like sin. I hope you have cut out and forwarded my printed letters to Washington—please continue to do so as they arrive.

I have had a tip-top time, here, for a few days (guest of Mr. Jno. Hooker's family—Beecher's relatives—in a general way of Mr. Bliss, also, who is head of the publishing firm.) Puritans are mighty straight-laced and they won't let me smoke in the parlor, but the Almighty don't make any better people.

Love to all—good-bye. I shall be in New York 3 days—then go on to the Capital.

Yrs aff'ly, especially Ma.,

Yr SAM.

No formal contract for the book had been made when this letter was written. A verbal agreement between Bliss and Clemens had been reached, to be ratified by an exchange of

letters in the near future. Bliss had made two propositions, *viz.*, ten thousand dollars, cash in hand, or a 5-per-cent. royalty on the selling price of the book. The cash sum offered looked very large to Mark Twain, and he was sorely tempted to accept it. He had faith, however, in the book, and in Bliss's ability to sell it. He agreed, therefore, to the royalty proposition. "The best business judgment I ever displayed" he often declared in after years. Five per cent. royalty sounds rather small in these days of more liberal contracts. But the American Publishing Company sold its books only by subscription, and the agents' commissions and delivery expenses ate heavily into the profits. Clemens was probably correct in saying that his percentage was larger than had been paid to any previous author except Horace Greeley. The John Hooker mentioned was the husband of Henry Ward Beecher's sister, Isabel. It was easy to understand the Beecher family's robust appreciation of Mark Twain.

From the office of Dan Slote, his room-mate of the *Quaker City*—"Dan" of the *Innocents*—Clemens wrote his letter that closed the agreement with Bliss.

*To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford :*

Office of Slote & Woodman, Blank Book Manufacturers,  
Nos 119 to 121 William St.  
New York, January 27, 1868.

MR. E. BLISS, JR.

Sec'y American Publishing Co.  
Hartford Conn.

DEAR SIR,—Your favor of Jan. 25th is received and in reply, I will say that I accede to your several propositions, *viz.*: That I furnish to the American Publishing Company, through you, with MSS sufficient for a volume of 500 to 600 pages, the subject to be the *Quaker City*, the voyage, description of places, &c., and also embodying the substance of the letters written by me during that trip, said MSS to be ready about the first of August, next, I to give all the usual and necessary attention in preparing said MSS for the press, and in preparation of illustrations, in correction of proofs—no use to be made by me of the material for this work in any way which will

conflict with its interest—the book to be sold by the American Publishing Co., by subscription—and for said MS and labor on my part said Company to pay me a copyright of 5 percent, upon the subscription price of the book for all copies sold.

As further proposed by you, this understanding, herein set forth shall be considered a binding contract upon all parties concerned, all minor details to be arranged between us hereafter.

Very truly yours,

SAM. L. CLEMENS.

(Private and General.)

I was to have gone to Washington tonight, but have held over a day, to attend a dinner given by a lot of newspaper Editors and literary scallwags, at the Westminster, Hotel. Shall go down to-morrow, if I survive the banquet.

Yrs truly

SAM. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain, in Washington, was in line for political preferment. His wide acquaintance on the Pacific slope, his new fame and growing popularity, his powerful and dreaded pen, all gave him special distinction at the capital. From time to time the offer of one office or another tempted him, but he wisely, or luckily, resisted. In his letters home are presented some of his problems.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis :*

224 F. Street Washington Feb. 6, 1868.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—For two months there have been some fifty applications before the government for the postmastership of San Francisco, which is the heaviest concentration of political power on the coast and consequently is a post which is much coveted.

When I found that a personal friend of mine, the Chief Editor of the *Alta*, was an applicant I said I didn't

want it—I would not take \$10,000 a year out of a friend's pocket.

The two months have passed. I heard day before yesterday that a new and almost unknown candidate had suddenly turned up on the inside track, and was to be appointed at once. I didn't like that, and went after his case in a fine passion. I hunted up all our Senators and representatives and found that his name was actually to come from the President early in the morning.

Then Judge Field said if I wanted the place he could pledge me the President's appointment—and Senator Conness said he would *guarantee* me the Senate's confirmation. It was a great temptation, but it would render it impossible to fill my book contract, and I had to drop the idea.

I have to spend August and September in Hartford—which isn't San Francisco. Mr. Conness offers me any choice out of five influential California offices. Now, some day or other I shall want an office and then, just my luck, I can't get it, I suppose.

They want to send me abroad, as a Consul or a Minister. I said I didn't want any of the pie. God knows I am mean enough and lazy enough, now, without being a foreign consul.

Sometime in the course of the present century I think they will create a Commissioner of Patents, and then I hope to get a berth for Orion.

I published 6 or 7 letters in the Tribune while I was gone—now I cannot get them. I suppose I must have them copied.

Love to all

Yrs

SAM.

Orion Clemens was once more a candidate for office. Nevada had become a State, with regularly elected officials, and Orion had somehow missed being chosen. His day of authority had passed, and the law having failed to support him, he was again back at his old occupation, setting type in St. Louis. He was,

as ever, full of dreams and inventions that would some day lead to fortune. With the gift of the Sellers imagination, inherited by all the family, he lacked the driving power which means achievement. More and more as the years went by he would lean upon his brother for moral and physical support. The chances for him in Washington do not appear to have been bright. The political situation under Andrew Johnson was not a happy one.

*To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis :*

224 F. Street, Wash., Feb. 21. (1868)

MY DEAR BRO.,—I am glad you do not want the clerkship, for that Patent Office is in such a muddle that there would be no security for the permanency of a place in it. The same remark will apply to all offices here, now, and no doubt will, till the close of the present administration.

Any man who holds a place here, now, stands prepared at all times to vacate it. You are doing, now, exactly what I wanted you to do a year ago.

We chase phantoms half the days of our lives.

It is well if we learn wisdom even then, and save the other half.

I am in for it. I must go on chasing them—until I marry—*then* I am done with literature and all other bosh,—that is, literature wherewith to please the general public.

I shall write to please myself, then. I hope you *will* set type till you complete that invention, for surely government pap must be nauseating food for a *man*—a man whom God has enabled to saw wood and be independent. It really seemed to me a falling from grace, the idea of going back to San Francisco nothing better than a mere postmaster, albeit the public would have thought I came with gilded honors, and in great glory.

I only retain correspondence enough, now, to make a living for myself, and have discarded all else, so that I may have time to spare for the book. Drat the thing,

I wish it were done, or that I had no other writing to do.

This is the place to get a poor opinion of everybody in. There isn't one man in Washington, in civil office, who has the brains of Anson Burlingame—and I suppose if China had not seized and saved his great talents to the world, this government would have discarded him when his time was up.

There are more pitiful intellects in this Congress! Oh, geeminy! There are few of them that I find pleasant enough company to visit.

I am most infernally tired of Wash. and its "attractions." To be *busy* is a man's only happiness—and I *am*—otherwise I should die

Yrs. aff

SAM.

The secretarial position with Senator Stewart was short-lived. They parted without friction, though in later years, when Stewart had become old and irascible, he used to recount a list of grievances and declare that he had been obliged to threaten violence in order to bring Mark to terms; but this was because the author of *Roughing It* had in that book taken liberties with the Senator, to the extent of an anecdote and portrait which, though certainly harmless enough, had for some reason given deep offence.

Mark Twain really had no time for secretary work. For one thing he was associated with John Swinton in supplying a Washington letter to a list of newspapers, and then he was busy collecting his *Quaker City* letters, and preparing the copy for his book. Matters were going well enough, when trouble developed from an unexpected quarter. The *Alta-California* had copyrighted the letters and proposed to issue them in book form. There had been no contract which would prevent this, and the correspondence which Clemens undertook with the *Alta* management led to nothing. He knew that he had powerful friends among the owners, if he could reach them personally, and he presently concluded to return to San Francisco, make what arrangement he could, and finish his book there.

The San Francisco trip proved successful. Once on the ground Clemens had little difficulty in convincing the *Alta*

publishers that they had received full value in the newspaper use of the letters, and that the book rights remained with the author. A letter to Bliss conveys the situation.

*To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford :*

San Francisco, May 5, '68.

E. BLISS, JR. Esq.

DR. SIR,—The Alta people, after some hesitation, have given me permission to use my printed letters, and have ceased to think of publishing them themselves in book form. I am steadily at work, and shall start East with the completed Manuscript, about the middle of June.

I lectured here, on the trip, the other night—over sixteen hundred dollars in gold in the house—every seat taken and paid for before night.

Yrs truly,

MARK TWAIN.

But he did not sail in June. His friends persuaded him to cover his lecture circuit of two years before, telling the story of his travels. This he did with considerable profit, being everywhere received with great honours. He ended this tour with a second lecture in San Francisco, announced in a droll and characteristic fashion which delighted his Pacific admirers, and ensured him a crowded house.

His agreement had been to deliver his MS. about August 1st. Returning by the *Chauncey*, July 28th, he was two days later in Hartford, and had placed the copy for the new book in Bliss's hands.

The story of Mark Twain's courtship need only be briefly sketched here as a setting for the letters of this period.

Through young Charles Langdon, his *Quaker City* ship-mate, he was invited to Elmira. The invitation was given for a week, but through a subterfuge—unpremeditated, and certainly fair enough in a matter of love—he was enabled considerably to prolong his visit. By the end of his stay he had become really "like one of the family," though certainly not yet accepted as such. The fragmentary letter that follows reflects something of his pleasant situation. The Mrs. Fairbanks mentioned in this letter had been something more than a "ship-mother" to Mark Twain. She was a woman of fine



literary taste, and *Quaker City* correspondent for her husband's paper, the *Cleveland Herald*. She had given Mark Twain sound advice as to his letters, which he had usually read to her, and had in no small degree modified his early natural tendency to exaggeration and outlandish humour.

*Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Elmira, N.Y. Aug. 24, 1868.

DEAR FOLKS,—You see I am progressing—though slowly. I shall be here a week yet—maybe two—for Charlie Langdon cannot get away until his father's chief business man returns from a journey—and a visit to Mrs. Fairbanks, at Cleveland, would lose half its pleasure if Charlie were not along. Moulton of St. Louis ought to be there too. We three were Mrs. F's "cubs," in the *Quaker City*. She took good care that we were at church regularly on Sundays; at the 8-bells prayer meeting every night; and she kept our buttons sewed on and our clothing in order—and in a word was as busy and considerate, and as watchful over her family of uncouth and unruly cubs, and as patient and as long-suffering, withal, as a natural mother. So we expect. . . .

Aug. 25th.

Didn't finish yesterday. Something called me away. I am most comfortably situated here. This is the pleasantest family I ever knew. I only have one trouble, and that is they give me too much thought and too much time and invention to the object of making my visit pass delightfully. It needs——

He had a standing invitation now to the Langdon home, and the end of the week often found him there. Yet when at last he proposed for the hand of Livy Langdon the acceptance was by no means prompt. He was a favourite in the Langdon household, but his suitability as a husband for the frail and gentle daughter was questioned.

However, he was carrying everything, just then, by storm.

The largest houses everywhere were crowded to hear him. Papers spoke of him as the coming man of the age, people came to their doors to see him pass.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Cleveland, Nov. 20, 1868.

DEAR FOLKS,—I played against the Eastern favorite, Fanny Kemble, in Pittsburgh, last night. She had 200 in her house, and I had upwards of 1,500. All the seats were sold (in a driving rain storm, 3 days ago,) as reserved seats at 25 cents extra, even those in the second and third tiers—and when the last seat was gone the box office had not been open more than 2 hours. When I reached the theatre they were turning people away and the house was crammed, 150 or 200 stood up, all the evening.

I go to Elmira tonight. I am simply lecturing for societies, at \$100 a pop.

Yrs

SAM.

It would be difficult for any family to refuse relationship with one whose star was so clearly ascending, especially when every inclination was in his favour, and the young lady herself encouraged his suit. A provisional engagement was presently made, but it was not finally ratified until February of the following year. Then in a letter from one of his lecture points he tells his people something of his happiness.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Lockport, N. Y. Feb. 27, 1869.

DEAR FOLKS,—I enclose \$20 for Ma. I thought I was getting ahead of her little assessments of \$35 a month, but find I am falling behind with her instead, and have let her go without money. Well, I did not mean to do it. But you see when people have been getting ready for months in a quiet way to get married, they are bound to grow stingy, and go to saving up money against that

awful day when it is sure to be needed. I am particularly anxious to place myself in a position where I can carry on my married life in good shape on *my own hook*, because I have paddled my own canoe so long that I could not be satisfied now to let anybody help me—and my proposed father-in-law is naturally so liberal that it would be just like him to want to give us a start in life. But I don't want it that way. I can start myself. I don't want any help. I can run this institution without any outside assistance, and I shall have a wife who will stand by me like a soldier through thick and thin, and never complain. She is only a little body, but she hasn't her peer in Christendom. I gave her only a plain gold engagement ring, when fashion imperatively demands a two-hundred dollar diamond one, and told her it was typical of her future lot—namely, that she would have to flourish on substantials rather than luxuries. (But you see I know the girl—she don't care anything about luxuries.) She is a splendid girl. She spends no money but her usual year's allowance, and she spends nearly every cent of that on other people. She will be a good sensible little wife, without any airs about her. I don't make intercession for her beforehand and ask you to love her, for there isn't any use in that—you couldn't help it if you were to try.

I warn you that whoever comes within the fatal influence of her beautiful nature is her willing slave for evermore. I take my affidavit on that statement. Her father and mother and brother embrace and pet her constantly, precisely as if she were a *sweetheart*, instead of a blood relation. She has unlimited power over her father, and yet she never uses it except to make him help people who stand in need of help. . . .

But if I get fairly started on the subject of my bride, I never shall get through—and so I will quit right here. I went to Elmira a little over a week ago, and staid four days and then had to go to New York on business. . . .

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis :*

Elmira, June 4. (1869)

DEAR FOLKS,—Livy sends you her love and loving good wishes, and I send you mine. The last 3 chapters of the book came tonight—we shall read it in the morning and then thank goodness, we are *done*.

In twelve months (or rather I believe it is fourteen,) I have earned just *eighty dollars* by my pen—two little magazine squibs and one newspaper letter—altogether the idlest, laziest 14 months I ever spent in my life. And in that time my *absolute* and *necessary* expenses have been scorchingly heavy—for I have now less than three thousand six hundred dollars in bank out of the eight or nine thousand I have made during those months, lecturing. My expenses were something frightful during the winter. I feel ashamed of my idleness, and yet I have had really *no* inclination to do anything but court Livy. I haven't any other inclination *yet*. I have determined not to work as hard traveling, any more, as I did last winter, and so I have resolved not to lecture outside of the 6 New England States next winter. My Western course would easily amount to \$10,000, but I would rather make 2 or 3 thousand in New England than submit again to so much wearing travel. (I *have* promised to talk ten nights for a thousand dollars in the State of New York, provided the places are close together.) But after all if I get located in a newspaper in a way to suit me, in the meantime, I don't want to lecture *at all* next winter, and probably shan't. I most cordially hate the lecture field. And after all, I shudder to think that I may never get out of it. In all conversations with Gough, and Anna Dickinson, Nasby, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Wendell Phillips and the other old stagers, I could not observe that *they* ever expected or hoped to get out of the business. I don't want to get wedded to it as they are. Livy thinks we can live on a very moderate sum and that we'll not need to

lecture. I know very well that she can live on a small allowance, but I am not so sure about myself. I can't scare her by reminding her that her father's family expenses are forty thousand dollars a year, because she produces the documents at once to show that precious little of this outlay is on *her* account. But I must not commence writing about Livy, else I shall never stop. There isn't such another little piece of perfection in the world as she is.

My time is become so short, now, that I doubt if I get to California this summer. If I manage to buy into a paper, I think I will visit you a while and not go to Cal. at all. I shall know something about it after my next trip to Hartford. We all go there on the 10th—the whole family—to attend a wedding, on the 17th. I am offered an interest in a Cleveland paper which would pay me \$2,300 to \$2,500 a year, and a salary added of \$3,000. The salary is fair enough, but the interest is not large enough, and so I must look a little further. The Cleveland folks say they *can* be induced to do a little better by me, and urge me to come out and talk business. But it don't strike me—I feel little or no inclination to go.

I believe I haven't anything else to write, and it is bed-time. I want to write to Orion, but I keep putting it off—I keep putting *everything* off. Day after day Livy and I are together all day long and until 10 at night, and then I feel dreadfully sleepy. If Orion will bear with me and forgive me I will square up with him yet. I will even let him kiss Livy.

My love to Mollie and Annie and Sammie and all.  
Good-bye.

Affectionately,

SAM.

The new book was issued in July. In spite of its immediate success—a success the like of which had scarcely been known in America—Mark Twain held himself to be, not a literary man, but a journalist. He had no plans for another book; as a newspaper owner and editor he expected, with his marriage,

to settle down and devote the rest of his life to journalism. The paper was the *Buffalo Express*; his interest in it was one-third—the purchase price, twenty-five thousand dollars, of which he had paid a part, Jervis Langdon, his future father-in-law, having furnished cash and security for the remainder. He was already in possession in August, but he was not regularly in Buffalo that autumn, for he had agreed with Redpath to deliver his *Quaker City* lecture, and the tour would not end until a short time before his wedding-day, February 2, 1870.

Our next letter was sent in response to an invitation from the New York Society of California Pioneers to attend a banquet given in New York City, October 13, 1869, and was, of course, read to the assembled diners.

*To the New York Society of California Pioneers, in  
New York City :*

Elmira, October 11, 1869.

GENTLEMEN,—Circumstances render it out of my power to take advantage of the invitation extended to me through Mr. Simonton, and be present at your dinner at New York. I regret this very much, for there are several among you whom I would have a right to join hands with on the score of old friendship, and I suppose I would have a sublime general right to shake hands with the rest of you on the score of kinship in California ups and downs in search of fortune.

If I were to tell some of my experience, you would recognize California blood in me; I fancy the old, old story would sound familiar, no doubt. I have the usual stock of reminiscences. For instance: I went to Esmeralda early. I purchased largely in the "Wide West," "Winne-mucca," and other fine claims, and was very wealthy. I fared sumptuously on bread when flour was \$200 a barrel and had beans for dinner every Sunday, when none but bloated aristocrats could afford such grandeur. But I finished by feeding batteries in a quartz mill at \$15 a week, and wishing I was a battery myself and had somebody to feed me. My claims in Esmeralda are there yet. I suppose I could be persuaded to sell.

I went to Humboldt District when it was new ; I became largely interested in the "Alba Nueva" and other claims with gorgeous names, and was rich again—in prospect. I owned a vast mining property there. I would not have sold out for less than \$400,000 at that time. But I will now. Finally I walked home—200 miles—partly for exercise, and partly because stage fare was expensive. Next I entered upon an affluent career in Virginia City, and by a judicious investment of labor and the capital of friends, became the owner of about all the worthless wild cat mines there were in that part of the country. Assessments did the business for me there. There were a hundred and seventeen assessments to one dividend, and the proportion of income to outlay was a little against me. My financial barometer went down to 32 Fahrenheit, and the subscriber was frozen out.

I took up extensions on the main lead—extensions that reached to British America in one direction, and to the Isthmus of Panama in the other—and I verily believe I would have been a rich man if I had ever found those infernal extensions. But I didn't. I ran tunnels till I tapped the Arctic Ocean, and I sunk shafts till I broke through the roof of perdition ; but those extensions turned up missing every time. I am willing to sell all that property and throw in the improvements.

Perhaps you remember that celebrated "North Ophir" ? I bought that mine. It was very rich in pure silver. You could take it out in lumps as large as a filbert. But when it was discovered that those lumps were melted half dollars, and hardly melted at that, a painful case of "salting" was apparent, and the undersigned adjourned to the poorhouse again.

I paid assessments on "Hale and Norcross" until they sold me out, and I had to take in washing for a living—and the next month that infamous stock went up to \$7,000 a foot.

I own millions and millions of feet of affluent silver

leads in Nevada—in fact the entire undercrust of that country nearly, and if Congress would move that State off my property so that I could get at it, I would be wealthy yet. But no, there she squats—and here am I. Failing health persuades me to sell. If you know of any one desiring a permanent investment, I can furnish one that will have the virtue of being eternal.

I have been through the California mill, with all its “dips, spurs and angles, variations and sinuosities.” I have worked there at all the different trades and professions known to the catalogues. I have been everything, from a newspaper editor down to a cow-catcher on a locomotive, and I am encouraged to believe that if there had been a few more occupations to experiment on, I might have made a dazzling success at last, and found out what mysterious designs Providence had in creating me.

But you perceive that although I am not a Pioneer, I have had a sufficiently variegated time of it to enable me to talk Pioneer like a native, and feel like a Forty-Niner. Therefore, I cordially welcome you to your old-remembered homes and your long deserted firesides, and close this screed with the sincere hope that your visit here will be a happy one, and not embittered by the sorrowful surprises that absence and lapse of years are wont to prepare for wanderers; surprises which come in the form of old friends missed from their places; silence where familiar voices should be; the young grown old; change and decay everywhere; home a delusion and a disappointment; strangers at hearthstone; sorrow where gladness was; tears for laughter; the melancholy pomp of death where the grace of life had been!

With all good wishes for the Returned Prodigals, and regrets that I cannot partake of a small piece of the fatted calf (rare and no gravy,)

I am yours, cordially,

MARK TWAIN.



By the end of January, 1870, more than thirty thousand copies of the *Innocents* had been sold, and in a letter to his publisher the author expressed his satisfaction.

*To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford :*

Elmira, Jan. 28 '70.

FRIEND BLISS,— . . . Yes, I *am* satisfied with the way you are running the book. You are running it in staving, tip-top, first-class style. I never wander into any corner of the country but I find that an agent has been there before me, and many of that community have read the book. And on an average about ten people a day come and hunt me up to thank me and tell me I'm a benefactor ! I guess this is a part of the programme we didn't expect in the first place.

I think you are rushing this book in a manner to be proud of ; and you will make the finest success of it that has ever been made with a subscription book, I believe. What with advertising, establishing agencies, &c., you have got an enormous lot of machinery under way and hard at work in a wonderfully short space of time. It is easy to see, when one travels around, that one must be endowed with a deal of genuine generalship in order to manœuvre a publication whose line of battle stretches from end to end of a great continent, and whose foragers and skirmishers invest every hamlet and besiege every village hidden away in all the vast space between.

I'll back you against any publisher in America, Bliss—or elsewhere.

Yrs as ever

CLEMENS

Samuel L. Clemens and Olivia Langdon were married in the Langdon home at Elmira, February 2, 1870, and took up their residence in Buffalo in a beautiful home, a wedding present from the bride's father.

*To James Redpath, in Boston :*

Elmira, N. Y. May 10, 1870.

FRIEND REDPATH,—I guess I am out of the field permanently.

Have got a lovely wife ; a lovely house, bewitchingly furnished ; a lovely carriage, and a coachman whose style and dignity are simply awe-inspiring—nothing less—and I am making more money than necessary—by considerable, and therefore why crucify myself nightly on the platform ? The subscriber will have to be excused from the present season at least.

Remember me to Nasby, Billings and Fall.<sup>1</sup> Luck to you ! I am going to print your menagerie, Parton and all, and make comments.

In next *Galaxy* I give Nasby's friend and mine from Philadelphia (John Quill, a literary thief) a "hyste."

Yours always and after.

MARK.

The reference to the *Galaxy* in the foregoing letter has to do with a department called *Memoranda*, which he had undertaken to conduct for the new magazine. His mother and sister were no longer far away in St. Louis. Soon after his marriage they had, by his advice, taken up residence at Fredonia, New York, where they could be easily visited from Buffalo.

Altogether, the outlook seemed bright to Mark Twain and his wife, during the first months of their marriage. Then there came a change. In a letter which Clemens wrote to his mother and sister we get the first chapter of disaster.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens, and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y. :*

Elmira, N. Y. June 25, 1870.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—We were called here suddenly by telegram, 3 days ago. Mr. Langdon is very low. We have well-nigh lost hope—all of us except Livy. Mr. Langdon, whose hope is one of his most prominent characteristics, says himself, this morning, that his

<sup>1</sup> Redpath's partner in the lecture lyceum.

recovery is only a *possibility*, not a probability. He made his will this morning—that is, appointed executors—nothing else was necessary. The household is sad enough. Charley is in Bavaria. We telegraphed Munroe & Co., Paris, to notify Charley to come home—they sent the message to Munich. Our message left here at 8 in the morning and Charley's answer arrived less than eight hours afterward. He sailed immediately.

He will reach home two weeks from now. The whole city is troubled. As I write (at the office), a dispatch arrives from Charley who has reached London, and will sail thence on 28th. He wants news. We cannot send him any.

Affectionately

SAM.

P. S. I sent \$300 to Fredonia Bank for Ma—It is in her name.

*To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis :*

Elmira, July 15, 1870.

MY DEAR BRO.,—Per contract I must have another 600-page book ready for my publisher Jan. 1, and I only began it today. The subject of it is a secret, because I may possibly change it. But as it stands, I propose to do up Nevada and Cal., beginning with the trip across the country in the stage. Have you a memorandum of the route we took—or the names of any of the Stations we stopped at? Do you remember any of the scenes, names, incidents or adventures of the coach trip?—for I remember next to *nothing* about the matter. Jot down a foolscap page of items for me. I wish I could have two days' talk with you.

I suppose I am to get the biggest copyright, this time, ever paid on a subscription book in this country.

Give our love to Mollie.—Mr. Langdon is very low.

Yr Bro SAM.

The "biggest copyright," mentioned in this letter, was a royalty of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., which Bliss had agreed to pay, on the retail price of the book. The book was *Roughing It*, though this title was not decided upon until considerably later. Orion Clemens eagerly furnished a detailed memorandum of the route of their overland journey, which brought this enthusiastic acknowledgment :

*To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis :*

Buf., 1870.

DEAR BRO.,—I find that your little memorandum book is going to be ever so much use to me, and will enable me to make quite a coherent narrative of the Plains journey instead of slurring it over and jumping 2,000 miles at a stride. The book I am writing will sell. In return for the use of the little memorandum book I shall take the greatest pleasure in forwarding to you the third \$1,000 which the publisher of the forthcoming work sends me—or the *first* \$1,000, I am not particular—they will both be in the first quarterly statement of account from the publisher.

In great haste,

Yr Obliged Bro.

SAM.

Love to Mollie. We are all getting along tolerably well.

Mr. Langdon died early in August, and Mrs. Clemens returned to Buffalo, exhausted in mind and body. If she hoped for rest now, in the quiet of her own home, she was disappointed, as the two brief letters that follow clearly show.

*To Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y. :*

Buffalo, Aug. 31, '70.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I know I ought to be thrashed for not writing<sup>g</sup> you, but I have kept putting it off. We get

heaps of letters every day ; it is a comfort to have somebody like you that will let us shirk and be patient over it. We got the book and I *did* think I wrote a line thanking you for it—but I suppose I neglected it.

We are getting along tolerably well. Mother [Mrs. Langdon] is here, and Miss Emma Nye. Livy cannot sleep since her father's death—but I give her a narcotic every night and *make* her. I am just as busy as I can be—am still writing for the *Galaxy* and also writing a book like the “*Innocents*” in size and style. I have got my work ciphered down to *days*, and I haven't a single day to spare between this and the date which, by written contract I am to deliver the M.S. of the book to the publisher. —In a hurry

Affectionately

SAM.

*To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis :*

Buf., Sept. 9th, 1870.

MY DEAR BRO,—O here ! I don't want to be consulted at all about Tenn. I don't want it even mentioned to me. When I make a suggestion it is for you to act upon it or throw it aside, but I beseech you never to ask my advice, opinion or consent about that hated property. If it was because I felt the slightest personal interest in the infernal land that I *ever* made a suggestion, the suggestion would never be made.

Do exactly as you please with the land—always remember this—that so trivial a percentage as ten per cent. will never sell it.

It is only a bid for a somnambulist.

I have no time to turn round, a young lady visitor (schoolmate of Livy's) is dying in the house of typhoid fever (parents are in South Carolina) and the premises are full of nurses and doctors and we are all fagged out.

Yrs. SAM.

Miss Nye, who had come to cheer her old schoolmate, had been prostrated with the deadly fever soon after her arrival. Another period of anxiety and nursing followed. A little more than a month later, November 7th, Langdon Clemens was prematurely born. To the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and wife, of Hartford, Mark Twain characteristically announced the new arrival.

*To Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and wife, in Hartford, Conn.:*

Buffalo, Nov. 12, '70.

DEAR UNCLE AND AUNT,—I came into the world on the 7th inst., and consequently am about five days old, now. I have had wretched health ever since I made my appearance. First one thing and then another has kept me under the weather, and as a general thing I have been chilly and uncomfortable.

I am not corpulent, nor am I robust in any way. At birth I only weighed  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pounds with my clothes on—and the clothes were the chief feature of the weight, too, I am obliged to confess. But I am doing finely, all things considered. I was at a standstill for 3 days and a half, but during the last 24 hours I have gained nearly an ounce, avoirdupois.

They all say I look very old and venerable—and I am aware, myself, that I never smile. Life seems a serious thing, what I have seen of it—and my observation teaches me that it is made up mainly of hiccups, unnecessary washings, and colic. But no doubt you, who are old, have long since grown accustomed and reconciled to what seems to me such a disagreeable novelty.

My father said, this morning, when my face was in repose and thoughtful, that I looked precisely as young Edward Twichell of Hartford used to look some 12 months ago—chin, mouth, forehead, expression—everything.

My little mother is very bright and cheery, and I guess she is pretty happy, but I don't know what about. She laughs a great deal, notwithstanding she is sick abed.

And she eats a great deal, though she says that is because the nurse desires it. And when she has had all the nurse desires her to have, she asks for more. She is getting along very well indeed.

My aunt Susie Crane has been here some ten days or two weeks, but goes home to-day, and Granny Fairbanks of Cleveland arrives to take her place.<sup>1</sup>

Very lovingly,

LANGDON CLEMENS.

P. S. Father said I had better write because you would be more interested in me, just now, than in the rest of the family.

Clemens had made the acquaintance of the Rev. Joseph Hopkins Twichell and his wife during his several sojourns in Hartford, in connection with his book publication, and the two men had immediately become firm friends. Twichell had come to Elmira in February to the wedding to assist Rev. Thos. K. Beecher in the marriage ceremony. Joseph Twichell was a devout Christian, while Mark Twain was a doubter, even a scoffer, where orthodoxy was concerned, yet the sincerity and humanity of the two men drew them together; their friendship was lifelong.

A second letter to Twichell, something more than a month later, shows a somewhat improved condition in the Clemens household.

*To Rev. Twichell, in Hartford:*

Buf., Dec. 19th, 1870.

DEAR J. H.,—All is well with us, I believe—though for some days the baby was quite ill. We consider him nearly restored to health now, however. Ask my brother about us—you will find him at Bliss's publishing office, where he is gone to edit Bliss's new paper—left here last Monday. Make his and his wife's acquaintance. Take Mrs. T. to see them as soon as they are fixed.

Livy is up, and the prince keeps her busy and anxious

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Fairbanks, of the *Quaker City* excursion.

these latter days and nights, but I am a bachelor up stairs and don't have to jump up and get the soothing syrup—though I would as soon do it as not, I assure you. (Livy will be certain to read this letter.)

Tell Harmony (Mrs. T.) that I do hold the baby, and do it pretty handily, too, although with occasional apprehensions that his loose head will fall off. I don't have to quiet him—he hardly ever utters a cry. He is always thinking about something. He is a patient, good little baby.

Smoke? I always smoke from 3 till 5 Sunday afternoons—and in New York the other day I smoked a week, day and night. But when Livy is well I smoke only those two hours on Sunday. I'm "boss" of the habit, now, and shall never let it boss me any more. Originally, I quit solely on Livy's account, (not that I believed there was the faintest *reason* in the matter, but just as I would deprive myself of sugar in my coffee if she wished it, or quit wearing socks if she thought them immoral,) and I stick to it yet on Livy's account, and shall always continue to do so, without a pang. But somehow it seems a pity that *you* quit, for Mrs. T. didn't mind it if I remember rightly. Ah, it is turning one's back upon a kindly Providence to spurn away from us the good creature he sent to make the breath of life a *luxury* as well as a necessity, *enjoyable* as well as useful, to go and quit smoking when there ain't any sufficient excuse for it! Why, my old boy, when they use to tell me I would shorten my life ten years by smoking, they little knew the devotee they were wasting their puerile word upon—they little knew how trivial and valueless I would regard a decade that had no smoking in it! But I won't persuade you, Twichell—I won't until I see you again—but *then* we'll smoke for a week together, and then shut off again.

I would have gone to Hartford from New York last Saturday, but I got so homesick I couldn't. But maybe I'll come soon.



No, Sir, *catch* me in the metropolis again, to get home-sick.

I didn't know Warner had a book out.

We send oceans and continents of love—I have worked myself down, today.

Yrs always

MARK.

The Buffalo *Express*, under Mark Twain's management, had become a sort of repository for humorous efforts, often of an indifferent order. Some of these things, signed by *nom de plumes*, were charged to Mark Twain. When Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee" devastated the country, and was so widely parodied, an imitation of it entitled, "Three Aces," and signed "Carl Byng," was printed in the *Express*. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, then editor of *Every Saturday*, had not met Mark Twain, and, noticing the verses printed in the exchanges over his signature, was one of those who accepted them as Mark Twain's work. He wrote rather an uncomplimentary note in *Every Saturday* concerning the poem and its authorship, characterizing it as a feeble imitation of Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee." Clemens promptly protested to Aldrich, then as promptly regretted having done so, feeling that he was making too much of a small matter. Hurriedly he sent a second brief note.

*To Thomas Bailey Aldrich, editor of "Every Saturday,"  
Boston, Massachusetts :*

Buffalo, Jan. 22, 1871.

DEAR SIR,—Please do not publish the note I sent you the other day about "Hy. Slocum's" plagiarism entitled "Three Aces"—it is not important enough for such a long paragraph. Webb writes me that he has put in a paragraph about it, too—and I have requested him to suppress it. If you would simply state, in a *line and a half* under "Literary Notes," that you mistook one "Hy. Slocum" (no, it was one "Carl Byng," I perceive) "Carl Byng" for Mark Twain, and that it was the former who wrote the plagiarism entitled "Three Aces," I think that

would do a fair justice without any unseemly display. But it *is* hard to be accused of plagiarism—a crime I never have committed in my life.

Yrs. Truly

MARK TWAIN.

But this came too late. Aldrich replied that he could not be prevented from doing him justice, as forty-two thousand copies of the first note, with the editor's apology duly appended, were already in press. He would withdraw his apology in the next number of *Every Saturday*, if Mark Twain said so. Mark Twain's response this time assumed the proportions of a letter.

*To Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in Boston :*

472 Delaware St., Buffalo, Jan. 28.

DEAR MR. ALDRICH,—No indeed, don't take back the apology! Hang it, I don't want to abuse a man's civility merely because he gives me the chance.

I hear a good deal about doing things on the "spur of the moment"—I invariably regret the things I do on the spur of the moment. That disclaimer of mine was a case in point. I am ashamed every time I think of my bursting out before an unconcerned public with that bombastic pow-wow about burning publisher's letters, and all that sort of imbecility, and about my not being an imitator, etc. Who would find out that I am a natural fool if I kept always cool and never let nature come to the surface? Nobody.

But I did hate to be accused of plagiarizing Bret Harte, who trimmed and trained and schooled me patiently until he changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse grotesquenesses to a writer of paragraphs and chapters that have found a certain favor in the eyes of even some of the very decentest people in the land—and this grateful remembrance of mine ought to be worth its face, seeing that Bret broke our long friendship a year ago without any cause or provocation that I am aware of.

Well, it *is* funny, the reminiscences that glare out from murky corners of one's memory, now and then, without warning. Just at this moment a picture flits before me : *Scene*—private room in Barnum's Restaurant, Virginia, Nevada ; present, Artemus Ward, Joseph T. Goodman, (editor and proprietor Daily "Enterprise"), and "Dan de Quille" and myself, reporters for same ; remnants of the feast thin and scattering, but *such* tautology and repetition of empty bottles everywhere visible as to be offensive to the sensitive eye ; time, 2.30 A.M. ; Artemus thickly reciting a poem about a certain infant you wot of, and interrupting himself and *being* interrupted every few lines by poundings of the table and shouts of "Splendid, by Shorzhe !" Finally, a long, vociferous, poundiferous and vitreous jingling of applause announces the conclusion, and then Artemus : "Let every man 'at loves his fellow man and 'preciates a poet 'at loves *his* fellow man, stan' up!—stan' up and drink health and long life to Thomas Bailey Aldrich!—and drink it *stanning* !" (On all hands fervent, enthusiastic, and sincerely honest attempts to comply.) Then Artemus : "Well—consider it *stanning*, and drink it just as ye are !" Which was done.

You must excuse all this stuff from a stranger, for the present, and when I see you I will apologize in full.

Do you know the prettiest fancy and the neatest that ever shot through Harte's brain ? It was this : When they were trying to decide upon a vignette for the cover of the *Overland*, a grizzly bear (of the arms of the State of California) was chosen. Nahl Bras. carved him and the page was printed, with him in it, looking thus : [Rude sketch of a grizzly bear.]

As a bear, he was a success—he was a good bear.—But then, it was objected, that he was an *objectless* bear—a bear that *meant* nothing in particular, signified nothing,—simply stood there snarling over his shoulder at nothing—and was painfully and manifestly a boorish and ill-natured intruder upon the fair page. All hands said that—none

were satisfied. They hated badly to give him up, and yet they hated as much to have him there when there was no *point* to him. But presently Harte took a pencil and drew these two simple lines under his feet and behold he was a magnificent success!—the ancient symbol of California savagery snarling at the approaching type of high and progressive Civilisation, the first Overland locomotive!: [Sketch of a small section of railway track.]

I just think that was nothing less than inspiration itself.

Once more I apologize, and this time I do it “stanning”!

Yrs. Truly

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

The “two simple lines,” of course, were the train rails under the bear’s feet, and completed the striking cover design of the *Overland* monthly.

The brief controversy over the “Three Aces” was the beginning of a long and happy friendship between Aldrich and Mark Twain.

In his reply to Clemens’s letter, Aldrich declared that he was glad now that, for the sake of such a letter, he had accused him falsely, and added:

“Mem. Always abuse people.

“When you come to Boston, if you do not make your presence manifest to me, I’ll put in a ¶ in *Every Saturday* to the effect that though you are generally known as Mark Twain your favourite *nom de plume* is ‘Barry Gray.’”

Buffalo agreed with neither Mrs. Clemens nor the baby. What with nursing and anguish of mind, Mark Twain found that he could do nothing on the new book, and that he must give up his magazine department. He had lost interest in his paper and his surroundings in general. Journalism and authorship are poor yoke-mates. To Orion Clemens, at this time editing Bliss’s paper at Hartford, he explained the situation.

*To Orion Clemens, in Hartford:*

Buffalo, 4th 1871.

MY DEAR BRO,—What I wanted of the “Liar” Sketch, was to work it into the California book—which I shall do.

But day before yesterday I concluded to go out of the *Galaxy* on the strength of it, so I have turned it into the last Memoranda I shall ever write, and published it as a "specimen chapter" of my forthcoming book.—

I have written the *Galaxy* people that I will never furnish them another article long or short, for any price but \$500.00 cash—and have requested them not to ask me for contributions any more, even at that price.

I hope that lets them out, for I will stick to that. Now do try and leave me clear out of the Publisher for the present, for I am endangering my reputation by writing *too much*—I want to get out of the public view for awhile.

I am still nursing *Livy* night and day and cannot write anything. I am nearly worn out. We shall go to *Elmira* ten days hence (if *Livy* can travel on a mattress then) and stay there till I have finished the *California* book—say three months. But I can't begin work right away when I get there—must have a week's rest, for I have been through 30 days' terrific siege.

That makes it after the middle of March before I can go fairly to work—and then I'll have to hump myself and not lose a moment. You and Bliss just put yourselves in my place and you will see that my hands are full and more than full.

When I told Bliss in N. Y. that I would write something for the Publisher I could not know that I was just about to lose *fifty days*. Do you see the difference it makes? Just as soon as ever I can, I will send some of the book M.S., but right in the first chapter I have got to alter the whole style of one of my characters and re-write him clear through to where I am now. It is no fool of a job, I can tell you, but the book will be greatly bettered by it. Hold on a few days—four or five—and I will see if I can get a few chapters fixed to send to Bliss.

I have offered this dwelling house and the *Express* for sale, and when we go to *Elmira* we leave here for good. I

shall not select a new home till the book is finished, but we have little doubt that Hartford will be the place.

We are almost certain of that. Ask Bliss how it would be to ship our furniture to Hartford, rent an upper room in a building and unbox it and store it there where somebody can frequently look after it. Is not the idea good ? The furniture is worth \$10,000 or \$12,000 and must not be jammed into any kind of a place and left unattended to for a year.

The first man that offers \$25,000 for our house can take it—it cost that. What are taxes there ? Here, all bunched together—of all kinds, they are 7 per cent—simply ruin.

The things you have written in the *Publisher* are tip-top. In haste,

Yr Bro—

SAM.

There are no further letters until the end of April, by which time the situation had improved. Clemens had sold his interest in the *Express* (though at a loss), had severed his magazine connection, and was located at Quarry Farm, on a beautiful hilltop above Elmira, the home of Mrs. Clemens's sister, Mrs. Theodore Crane. The pure air and rest of that happy place, where they were to spend so many idyllic summers, had proved beneficial to the sick ones, and work on the new book progressed in consequence.

*To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford :*

Elmira, Monday, May 15th 1871.

FRIEND BLISS,—Yrs rec'd enclosing check for \$703.35. The old "Innocents" holds out handsomely.

I have MS. enough on hand now, to make (allowing for engravings) about 400 pages of the book—consequently am two-thirds done. I intended to run up to Hartford about the middle of the week and take it along ; because it has chapters in it that ought by all means to be in the prospectus ; but I find myself so thoroughly interested in my work now (a thing I have not experienced for months) that I can't bear to lose a single moment of the inspiration.

So I will stay here and peg away as long as it lasts. My present idea is to write as much more as I have already written, and then cull from the mass the very best chapters and discard the rest. I am not half as well satisfied with the first part of the book as I am with what I am writing now. When I get it done I want to see the man who will begin to read it and not finish it. If it falls short of the "Innocents" in any respect I shall lose my guess.

When I was writing the "Innocents" my daily stunt was 30 pages of MS and I hardly ever got beyond it; but I have gone over that nearly every day for the last ten. That shows that I am writing with a red-hot interest. Nothing grieves me now—nothing troubles me, nothing bothers me or gets my attention—I don't think of anything but the book, and I don't have an hour's unhappiness about anything, and don't care two cents whether school keeps or not. It will be a bully book. If I keep up my present lick three weeks more I shall be able and willing to scratch out half of the chapters of the Overland narrative—and shall do it.

You do not mention having received my second batch of MS, sent a week or two ago—about 100 pages.

If you want to issue a prospectus and go right to canvassing, say the word and I will forward some more MS—or send it by hand—special messenger. Whatever chapters you think are unquestionably good, we will retain of course, so they can go into a prospectus as well one time as another. The book will be done soon, now. I have 1200 pages of MS already written and am now writing 200 a week—more than that, in fact; during the past week wrote 23 one day, then 30, 33, 35, 52, and 65.—How's that?

It will be a starchy book, and should be full of snappy pictures—especially pictures worked in with the letterpress. The dedication will be worth the price of the volume—thus:

*To the Late Cain.*

This Book is Dedicated :

Not on account of respect for his memory, for it merits little respect ; not on account of sympathy with him, for his bloody deed placed him without the pale of sympathy, strictly speaking : but out of a mere human commiseration for him that it was his misfortune to live in a dark age that knew not the beneficent Insanity Plea.

I think it will do.

YRS. CLEMENS.

P. S.—The reaction is beginning and my stock is looking up. I am getting the bulkiest offers for books and almanacs ; am flooded with lecture invitations, and one periodical offers me \$6,000 cash for 12 articles, of any length and on any subject, treated humorously or otherwise.

Clemens's enthusiasm for work was now such that he agreed with Redpath to return to the platform that autumn, and he began at once writing lectures.

*Letters to James Redpath, in Boston :*

Elmira, June 27, 1871.

DEAR RED,—Wrote another lecture—a third one—today. *It* is the one I am going to deliver. I think I shall call it "Reminiscences of Some Pleasant Characters Whom I Have Met," (or should the "whom" be left out?) It covers my whole acquaintance—kings, lunatics, idiots and all. Suppose you give the item a start in the Boston papers. If I write fifty lectures I shall only choose one and talk that one only.

No sir : Don't you put that scarecrow (portrait) from the *Galaxy* in, I won't stand that nightmare.

Yours,

MARK.



Elmira, July 10, 1871.

DEAR REDPATH,—I never made a success of a lecture delivered in a church yet. People are afraid to laugh in a church. They can't be made to do it in any possible way.

Success to Fall's carbuncle and many happy returns.

Yours,

MARK.

*To Mr. Fall, in Boston :*

Elmira, N. Y. July 20, 1871

FRIEND FALL,—Redpath tells me to blow up. Here goes ! I wanted you to scare Rondout off with a big price. \$125 ain't big. I got \$100 the first time I ever talked there and now they have a much larger hall. It is a hard town to get to—I run a chance of getting caught by the ice and missing next engagement. Make the price \$150 and let them draw out.

Yours,

MARK.

*Letters to James Redpath, in Boston :*

Hartford, Tuesday Aug 8, 1871.

DEAR RED,—I am different from other women ; my mind changes oftener. People who have no mind can easily be steadfast and firm, but when a man is loaded down to the guards with it, as I am, every heavy sea of foreboding or inclination, maybe of indolence, shifts the cargo. See ? Therefore, if you will notice, one week I am likely to give rigid instructions to confine me to New England ; next week, send me to Arizona ; the next week withdraw my name ; the next week give you full untrammelled swing ; and the week following modify it. You must try to keep the run of my mind, Redpath, it is your business being the agent, and it always was too many for me. It appears to me to be one of the finest

pieces of mechanism I have ever met with. Now about the West, this week, I am willing that you shall retain all the Western engagements. But what I shall want *next* week is still with God.

Let us not profane the mysteries with soiled hands and prying eyes of sin.

Yours,

MARK.

P. S. Shall be here 2 weeks, will run up there when Nasby comes.

Elmira, N. Y. Sept. 15, 1871.

DEAR REDPATH,—I wish you would get me released from the lecture at Buffalo. I mortally hate that society there, and I don't doubt they hired me. I once gave them a packed house free of charge, and they never even had the common politeness to thank me. They left me to shift for myself, too, à la Bret Harte at Harvard. Get me rid of Buffalo! Otherwise I'll have no recourse left but to get sick the day I lecture there. I can get sick easy enough, by the simple process of saying the word—well never mind what word—I am not going to lecture there.

Yours,

MARK.

The house they had taken in Hartford was the Hooker property on Forest Street, a handsome place in a distinctly literary neighbourhood. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Dudley Warner, and other well-known writers were within easy walking distance; Twichell was perhaps half a mile away. But a lecture circuit cannot be restricted to the radius of Boston. Clemens was presently writing to Redpath from Washington and points farther west.

*To James Redpath, in Boston :*

Washington, Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1871.

DEAR RED,—I have come square out, thrown "Reminiscences" overboard, and taken "Artemus Ward,

Humorist," for my subject. Wrote it here on Friday and Saturday, and read it from MS last night to an enormous house. It suits *me* and I'll never deliver the nasty, nauseous "Reminiscences" any more.

Yours,

MARK.

The Artemus Ward lecture lasted eleven days, then he wrote :

*To Redpath and Fall, in Boston :*

Buffalo Depot, Dec. 8, 1871.

REDPATH & FALL, BOSTON,—Notify all hands that from this time I shall talk nothing but selections from my forthcoming book "Roughing It." Tried it last night. Suits me tip-top.

SAM'L L. CLEMENS.

The *Roughing It* chapters proved a success, and continued in high favour through the rest of the season.

*To James Redpath, in Boston :*

Logansport, Ind Jan. 2, 1872.

FRIEND REDPATH,—Had a splendid time with a splendid audience in Indianapolis last night—a perfectly jammed house, just as I have had all the time out here. I like the new lecture but I hate the "Artemus Ward" talk and won't talk it any more. No man ever approved that choice of subject in my hearing, I think.

Give me some comfort. If I am to talk in New York, am I going to have a good house? I don't care now to have any appointments cancelled. I'll even "fetch" those Dutch Pennsylvanians with this lecture.

Have paid up \$4000 indebtedness. You are the last on my list. Shall begin to pay you in a few days and then I shall be a free man again.

Yours,

MARK.

With his debts paid, Clemens was anxious to be getting home. Two weeks following the above he wrote Redpath that he would accept no more engagements at any price, outside of New England, and added, "The fewer engagements I have from this time forth the better I shall be pleased." By the end of February he was back in Hartford, refusing an engagement in Boston, and announcing to Redpath, "If I had another engagement I'd rot before I'd fill it." From which we gather that he was not entirely happy in the lecture field.

Meantime, *Roughing It* had appeared and was selling abundantly. Mark Twain, free of debt, and in pleasant circumstances, felt that the outlook was bright. It became even more so when, in March, the second child, a little girl, Susy, was born, with no attending misfortunes. But, then, in the early summer little Langdon died. It was seldom, during all of Mark Twain's life, that he enjoyed more than a brief period of unmingled happiness.

It was in June of that year that Clemens wrote his first letter to William Dean Howells—the first of several hundred that would follow in the years to come, and has in it something that is characteristic of nearly all the Clemens-Howells letters—a kind of tender playfulness that answered to something in Howells's make-up, his sense of humour, his wide knowledge of a humanity which he pictured so amusingly to the world.

*To William Dean Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, June 15, 1872.

FRIEND HOWELLS,—Could you tell me how I could get a copy of your portrait as published in *Hearth and Home* ? I hear so much talk about it as being among the finest works of art which have yet appeared in that journal, that I feel a strong desire to see it. Is it suitable for framing ? I have written the publishers of *H & H* time and again, but they say that the demand for the portrait immediately exhausted the edition and now a copy cannot be had, even for the European demand, which has now begun. Bret Harte has been here, and says his family would not be without that portrait for any consideration. He says his children get up in the night and yell for it. I would give anything for a copy of that portrait to put up in my

parlor. I have Oliver Wendell Holmes's and Bret Harte's, as published in *Every Saturday*, and of all the swarms that come every day to gaze upon them none go away that are not softened and humbled and made more resigned to the will of God. If I had yours to put up alongside of them, I believe the combination would bring more souls to earnest reflection and ultimate conviction of their lost condition, than any other kind of warning would. Where in the nation can I get that portrait? Here are heaps of people that want it,—that *need* it. There is my uncle. *He* wants a copy. He is lying at the point of death. He has *been* lying at the point of death for two years. He wants a copy—and I want him to *have* a copy. And I want you to send a copy to the man that shot my dog. I want to see if he is dead to every human instinct.

Now you send me that portrait. I am sending you mine, in this letter; and am glad to do it, for it has been greatly admired. People who are judges of art, find in the execution a grandeur which has not been equalled in this country, and an expression which has not been approached in *any*.

Yrs truly,

S. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. 62,000 copies of "*Roughing It*" sold and delivered in 4 months

The Clemens family did not spend the summer at Quarry Farm that year. The sea air was prescribed for Mrs. Clemens and the baby, and they went to Saybrook, Connecticut, to Fenwick Hall. Clemens wrote very little, though he seems to have planned *Tom Sawyer*, and perhaps made its earliest beginning, which was in dramatic form.

His mind, however, was otherwise active. He was always more or less given to inventions, and in his next letter we find a description of one which he brought to comparative perfection.

He had also conceived the idea of another book of travel, and this was his purpose of a projected trip to England,

*To Orion Clemens, in Hartford :*

Fenwick Hall, Saybrook, Conn. Aug. 11, 1872

MY DEAR BRO,—I shall sail for England in the Scotia, Aug. 21.

But what I wish to put on record now, is my new invention—hence this note, which you will preserve. It is this—a *self-pasting scrap-book*—good enough idea if some juggling tailor does not come along and ante-date me a couple of months, as in the case of the elastic vest-strap.

The nuisance of keeping a scrap-book is : 1. One never has paste or gum tragacanth handy ; 2. Mucilage won't stick, or stay, 4 weeks ; 3. Mucilage sucks out the ink and makes the scraps unreadable ; 4. To daub and paste 3 or 4 pages of scraps is tedious, slow, nasty and tiresome. My idea is this : Make a scrap-book *with leaves veneered or coated with gum-stickum* of some kind ; wet the page with sponge, brush, rag or tongue, and dab on your scraps like postage stamps.

Lay on the gum in columns of stripes.

Each stripe of gum the length of say 20 ems, small pica, and as broad as your finger ; a blank about as broad as your finger between each 2 stripes—so in wetting the paper you need not wet any more of the gum than your scrap or scraps will cover—then you may shut up the book and the leaves won't stick together.

Preserve, also, the envelope of this letter—postmark ought to be good evidence of the date of this great humanizing and civilizing invention.

I'll put it into Dan Slote's hands and tell him he must send you all over America to urge its use upon stationers and booksellers—so don't buy into a newspaper. The name of this thing is “Mark Twain's Self-Pasting Scrap-book.”

All well here. Shall be up 2 P. M. Tuesday. Send the carriage.

Yr Bro.

S. L. CLEMENS.

Clemens did, in fact, sail for England on the given date, and was lavishly received there. All literary London joined in giving him a good time. He had not as yet been received seriously by the older American men of letters, but England made no question as to his title to first rank. Already, too, they classified him as of the human type of Lincoln, and revelled in him without stint. Howells writes: "In England, rank, fashion, and culture rejoiced in him. Lord Mayors, Lord Chief Justices, and magnates of many kinds were his hosts."

He was treated so well and enjoyed it all so much that he could not write a book—the kind of book he had planned. One could not poke fun at a country or a people that had welcomed him with open arms. He made plenty of notes, at first, but presently gave up the book idea and devoted himself altogether to having a good time.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford :*

London, Sep. 15, 1872

Livy, darling, everybody says lecture—lecture—lecture—but I have not the least idea of doing it—certainly not at present. Mr. Dolby, who took Dickens to America, is coming to talk business to me tomorrow, though I have sent him word once before, that I can't be hired to talk here, because I have no time to spare.

There is too much sociability—I do not get along fast enough with work. Tomorrow I lunch with Mr. Toole and a Member of Parliament—Toole is the most able Comedian of the day. And then I am done for a while. On Tuesday I mean to hang a card to my keybox, inscribed—"Gone out of the City for a week"—and then I shall go to work and work hard. One can't be caught in a hive of 4,000,000 people, like this.

I have got such a perfectly delightful razor. I have a notion to buy some for Charley, Theodore and Slee—for I *know* they have no such razors there. I have got a neat little watch-chain for Annie—\$20.

I love you my darling. My love to all of you.

SAML.

*To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford :*

London, Sept. 28, 1872.

FRIEND BLISS,—I have been received in a sort of tremendous way, tonight, by the brains of London, assembled at the annual dinner of the Sheriffs of London—mine being (between you and me) a name which was received with a flattering outburst of spontaneous applause when the long list of guests was called.

I might have perished on the spot but for the friendly support and assistance of my excellent friend Sir John Bennett—and I want you to paste the enclosed in a couple of the handsomest copies of the “Innocents” and “Roughing It,” and send them to him. His address is—

“Sir John Bennett,  
Cheapside,  
London.”

Yrs Truly

S. L. CLEMENS.

The “relating circumstances” were these : At the above-mentioned dinner there had been a roll-call of the distinguished guests present, and each name had been duly applauded. Clemens, conversing in a whisper with his neighbour, Sir John Bennett, did not give very close attention to the names, applauding mechanically with the others.

Finally, a name was read that brought out a vehement hand-clapping. Mark Twain, not to be outdone in cordiality, joined vigorously, and kept his hands going even after the others finished. Then, remarking the general laughter, he whispered to Sir John : “Whose name was that we were just applauding ?”

“Mark Twain’s.”

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett :*

London, Nov. 6, 1872.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I have been so everlasting busy that I *couldn’t* write—and moreover I have



been so unceasingly lazy that I couldn't have written anyhow. I came here to take notes for a book, but I haven't done much but attend dinners and make speeches. But have had a jolly good time and I do hate to go away from these English folks; they make a stranger feel entirely at home—and they laugh so easily that it is a comfort to make after-dinner speeches here. I have made hundreds of friends; and last night in the crush of the opening of the New Guild-hall Library and Museum, I was surprised to meet a familiar face every few steps. Nearly 4,000 people, of both sexes, came and went during the evening, so I had a good opportunity to make a great many new acquaintances.

Livy is willing to come here with me next April and stay several months—so I am going home next Tuesday. I would sail on Saturday, but that is the day of the Lord Mayor's annual grand state dinner, when they say 900 of the great men of the city sit down to table, a great many of them in their fine official and court paraphernalia, so I must not miss it. However, I may yet change my mind and sail Saturday. I am looking at a fine Magic lantern which will cost a deal of money, and if I buy it Sammy may come and learn to make the gas and work the machinery, and paint pictures for it on glass. I mean to give exhibitions for charitable purposes in Hartford, and charge a dollar a head.

In a hurry, Yrs affly

SAM.

On his second visit to London Mark Twain was literally overwhelmed with honours and entertainment, his rooms at the Langham were like a court. Such men as Robert Browning, Turgenieff, Sir John Millais, and Charles Kingsley hastened to call. Kingsley and others gave him dinners. Mrs. Clemens to her sister wrote: "It is perfectly discouraging to try to write you."

The continuous excitement presently told on her. In July all further engagements were cancelled, and Clemens took his little family to Scotland, for quiet and rest. They broke the

journey at York, and it was there that Mark Twain wrote the only letter remaining from this time.

*Part of a letter to Mrs. Jervis Langdon, of Elmira, N. Y. :*

For the present we shall remain in this queer old walled town, with its crooked, narrow lanes, that tell us of their old day that knew no wheeled vehicles ; its plaster-and-timber dwellings, with upper stories far overhanging the street, and thus marking *their* date, say three hundred years ago ; the stately city walls, the castellated gates, the ivy-grown foliage-sheltered most noble and picturesque ruin of St. Mary's Abbey, suggesting *their* date, say five hundred years ago, in the heart of Crusading times and the glory of English chivalry and romance ; the vast Cathedral of York, with its worn carvings and quaintly pictured windows, preaching of still remoter days ; the outlandish names of streets and courts and byways that stand as a record and a memorial, all these centuries, of Danish dominion here in still earlier times ; the hint here and there of King Arthur and his knights and their bloody fights with Saxon oppressors round about this old city more than thirteen hundred years gone by ; and, last of all, the melancholy old stone coffins and sculptured inscriptions, a venerable arch and a hoary tower of stone that still remain and are kissed by the sun and caressed by the shadows every day, just as the sun and the shadows have kissed and caressed them every lagging day since the Roman Emperor's soldiers placed them here in the times when Jesus the Son of Mary walked the streets of Nazareth a youth, with no more name or fame than the Yorkshire boy who is loitering down this street this moment.

Their destination was Edinburgh, where they remained a month. Mrs. Clemens's health gave way on their arrival there, and her husband, knowing the name of no other physician in the place, looked up Dr. John Brown, author of *Rab and His*

*Friends*, and found in him not only a skilful practitioner, but a lovable companion, to whom they all became deeply attached. Little Susy, now seventeen months old, became his special favourite. He named her Megalops, because of her great eyes.

Mrs Clemens regained her strength and they returned to London. Clemens, still urged to lecture, finally agreed with George Dolby to a week's engagement, and added a promise that after taking his wife and daughter back to America he would return immediately for a more extended course. Dolby announced him to appear at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, for the week of October 13-18, his lecture to be the old Sandwich Islands talk that seven years before had brought him his first success. The great hall, the largest in London, was thronged at each appearance, and the papers declared that Mark Twain had no more than "whetted the public appetite" for his humour. Three days later, October 21, 1873, Clemens, with his little party, sailed for home. Halfway across the ocean he wrote the friend they had left in Scotland :

*To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh :*

Mid-Atlantic, Oct. 30, 1873.

OUR DEAR FRIEND THE DOCTOR,—We have plowed a long way over the sea, and there's twenty-two hundred miles of restless water between us, now, besides the railway stretch. And yet you are so present with us, so close to us that a span and a whisper would bridge the distance.

The first three days were stormy, and wife, child, maid, and Miss Spaulding were all sea-sick 25 hours out of the 24, and I was sorry I ever started. However, it has been smooth, and balmy, and sunny and altogether lovely for a day or two now, and at night there is a broad luminous highway stretching over the sea to the moon, over which the spirits of the sea are traveling up and down all through the secret night and having a genuine good time, I make no doubt.

Today they discovered a "collie" on board! I find (as per advertisement which I sent you) that they won't carry dogs in these ships at any price. This one has been concealed up to this time. Now his owner has to pay

£10 or heave him overboard. Fortunately the doggie is a performing doggie and the money will be paid. So after all it was just as well you didn't intrust your collie to us.

A poor little child died at midnight and was buried at dawn this morning—sheeted and shotted, and sunk in the middle of the lonely ocean in water three thousand fathoms deep. Pity the poor mother.

With our love.

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain was back in London, lecturing again at the Queen's Concert Rooms, after barely a month's absence. Charles Warren Stoddard, whom he had known in California, shared his apartment at the Langham, and acted as his secretary.

He remained in London two months, lecturing steadily at Hanover Square to full houses.

*To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh :*

Farmington Avenue, Hartford,

Feb'y. 28, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We are all delighted with your commendations of the "Gilded Age"—and the more so because some of our newspapers have set forth the opinion that *Warner* really wrote the book and I only added my name to the title page in order to give it a larger sale. I wrote the first eleven chapters, every word and every line. I also wrote chapters 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 42, 43, 45, 51, 52, 53, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, and portions of 35, 49 and 56. So I wrote 32 of the 63 chapters *entirely* and part of 3 others beside.

The fearful financial panic hit the book heavily, for we published it in the midst of it. But nevertheless in the 8 weeks that have now elapsed since the day we published, we have sold 40,000 copies ; which gives £3,000 royalty to be divided between the authors. This is really the largest two-months' sale which any American book has ever achieved (unless one excepts the cheaper editions of Uncle

Tom's Cabin). The average price of our book is 16 shillings a copy—Uncle Tom was 2 shillings a copy. But for the panic our sale would have been doubled, I verily believe. I do not believe the sale will ultimately go over 100,000 copies.

I shipped to you, from Liverpool, Darley's Illustrations of Judd's "Margaret" (the waiter at the Adelphi Hotel agreeing to ship it securely per parcel delivery,) and I do hope it did not miscarry, for we in America think a deal of Darley's<sup>1</sup> work. I shipped the novel ("Margaret") to you from here a *week* ago.

Indeed I *am* thankful for the wife and the child—and if there is one individual creature on all this footstool who is more thoroughly and uniformly and unceasingly *happy* than I am I defy the world to produce him and *prove* him. In my opinion, he doesn't exist. I was a mighty rough, coarse, unpromising subject when Livy took charge of me 4 years ago, and I may *still* be, to the rest of the world, but not to her. She has made a very creditable job of me.

Success to the Mark Twain Club!—and the novel shibboleth of the Whistle. Of course any member rising to speak would be required to preface his remark with a keen respectful whistle at the chair—the chair recognizing the speaker with an answering shriek, and then as the speech proceeded, its gravity and force would be emphasized and its impressiveness augmented by the continual interjection of whistles in place of punctuation-pauses; and the applause of the audience would be manifested in the same way. . . .

They've gone to luncheon and I must follow. With strong love from us both.

your friend,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

<sup>1</sup> Felix Octavius Carr Darley, 1822–1888, illustrator of the works of Irving, Cooper, etc. Probably the most distinguished American illustrator of his time.

*To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh :*

Elmira, N. Y., April 27, '74.

DEAR DOCTOR,—This town is in the interior of the State of New York—and was my wife's birth-place. We are here to spend the whole summer. Although it is so near summer, we had a great snow-storm yesterday, and one the day before. This is rather breaking in upon our plans, as it may keep us down here in the valley a trifle longer than we desired. It gets fearfully hot here in the summer, so we spend our summers on top of a hill 6 or 700 feet high, about two or three miles from here—it never gets hot up there.

Mrs. Clemens is pretty strong, and so is the "little wife" barring a desperate cold in the head—the child grows in grace and beauty marvellously. I wish the nations of the earth would combine in a baby show and give us a chance to compete. I must try to find one of her latest photographs to enclose in this. And this reminds me that Mrs. Clemens keeps urging me to ask you for your photograph and last night she said, "and be sure to ask him for a photograph of his sister, and Jock—but say *Master* Jock—do not be headless and forget that courtesy ; he is Jock in our memories and our talk, but he has a right to his title when a body uses his name in a letter." Now I have got it all in.—I can't have made any mistake *this* time. Miss Clara Spaulding looked in, a moment, yesterday morning, as bright and good as ever. She would like to lay her love at your feet if she knew I was writing—as would also fifty friends of ours whom you have never seen, and whose homage is as fervent as if the cold and clouds and darkness of a mighty sea did not lie between their hearts and you. Poor old Rab had not many "friends" at first, but if all his friends of today could gather to his grave from the four corners of the earth what a procession there would be ! And Rab's friends are your friends.

I am going to work when we get on the hill—till then

I've got to lie fallow, albeit against my will. We join in love to you and yours.

Your friend ever,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. I enclose a specimen of villainy. A man pretends to be my brother and my lecture agent—gathers a great audience together in a city more than a thousand miles from here, and then pockets the money and elopes, leaving the audience to wait for the imaginary lecturer! I am after him with the law.

It was a historic summer at the Farm. A new baby arrived in June; a new study was built for Mark Twain by Mrs. Crane, on the hillside near the old quarry; a new book was begun in it—*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*—and a play, the first that Mark Twain had really attempted, was completed—the dramatization of *The Gilded Age*.

An early word went to Hartford of conditions at the Farm.

*To Rev. and Mrs. Twichell, in Hartford:*

Elmira, June 11, '74.

MY DEAR OLD JOE AND HARMONY,—The baby is here and is the great American Giantess—weighing  $7\frac{3}{4}$  pounds. We had to wait a good long time for her, but she was full compensation when she *did* come.

The Modoc was delighted with it, and gave it her doll at once. There is nothing selfish about the Modoc. She is fascinated with the new baby. The Modoc rips and tears around out doors, most of the time, and consequently is as hard as a pine knot and as brown as an Indian. She is bosom friend to all the ducks, chickens, turkeys and guinea hens on the place. Yesterday as she marched along the winding path that leads up the hill through the red clover beds to the summer-house, there was a long procession of these fowls stringing contentedly after her, led by a stately rooster who can look over the Modoc's head. The devotion of these vassals has been purchased with daily largess of

Indian meal, and so the Modoc, attended by her body-guard, moves in state wherever she goes.

Susie Crane has built the loveliest study for me, you ever saw. It is octagonal, with a peaked roof, each octagon filled with a spacious window, and it sits perched in complete isolation on top of an elevation that commands leagues of valley and city and retreating ranges of distant blue hills. It is a cosy nest, with just room in it for a sofa and a table and three or four chairs—and when the storms sweep down the remote valley and the lightning flashes above the hills beyond, and the rain beats upon the roof over my head, imagine the luxury of it! It stands 500 feet above the valley and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from it.

However one must not write all day. We send continents of love to you and yours.

Affectionately

MARK.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, Aug. 22, 1874.

DEAR HOWELLS,—I have just finished reading the 'Foregone Conclusion' to Mrs. Clemens and we think you have even outdone yourself. I should think that this must be the daintiest, truest, most admirable workmanship that was ever put on a story. The creatures of God do not act out their natures more unerringly than yours do. If your genuine stories can die, I wonder by what right old Walter Scott's artificialities shall continue to live.

I brought Mrs. Clemens back from her trip in a dreadfully broken-down condition—so by the doctor's orders we unpacked the trunks sorrowfully to lie idle here another month instead of going at once to Hartford and proceeding to furnish the new house which is now finished. We hate to have it go longer desolate and tenantless, but cannot help it.



By and by, if the madam gets strong again, we are hoping to have the Grays there, and you and the Aldrich households, and Osgood, down to engage in an orgy with them.

Ys Ever

MARK.

Howells was editor of the *Atlantic* by this time, and had been urging Clemens to write something suitable for that magazine. He had done nothing, however, until this summer at Quarry Farm. There, one night in the moonlight, Mrs Crane's coloured cook, who had been a slave, was induced to tell him her story. It was exactly the story to appeal to Mark Twain, and the kind of thing he could write. He set it down next morning, as nearly in her own words and manner as possible, without departing too far from literary requirements.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, Sept. 2, '74.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—. . . I enclose also a “ True Story ” which has no humor in it. You can pay as lightly as you choose for that, if you want it, for it is rather out of my line. I have not altered the old colored woman's story except to begin at the beginning, instead of the middle, as she did—and traveled both ways. . .

Yrs Ever

MARK.

Along with the “ True Story ” Mark Twain had sent the “ Fable for Good Old Boys and Girls ”; but this Howells returned, not, as he said, because he didn't like it, but because the *Atlantic* on matters of religion was just in that “ Good Lord, Good Devil condition when a little fable like yours wouldn't leave it a single Presbyterian, Baptist, Unitarian, Episcopalian, Methodist, or Millerite *paying* subscriber, while all the dead-heads would stick to it and abuse it in the denominational newspapers ! ”

But the shorter MS. had been only a brief diversion. Clemens had all along intended to dramatize the story of Colonel Sellers, and was one day thunderstruck to receive word from California that a San Francisco dramatist had appropriated his

character in a play written for John T. Raymond. Clemens had taken out dramatic copyright on *The Gilded Age*, and immediately stopped the performance by telegraph. A correspondence between the author and the dramatist followed, leading to a friendly arrangement by which the latter agreed to dispose of his version to Mark Twain.

*To Mrs. Clemens—intended for Howells, Aldrich, etc.*

Boston, Nov. 16, 1935. [1874]

DEAR LIVY,—You observe I still call this beloved old place by the name it had when I was young. *Limerick!* It is enough to make a body sick.

The gentlemen-in-waiting stare to see me sit here *telegraphing* this letter to you, and no doubt they are smiling in their sleeves. But *let* them! The slow old fashions are good enough for me, thank God, and I will none other. When I see one of these modern fools sit absorbed, holding the end of a telegraph wire in his hand, and reflect that a thousand miles away there is another fool hitched to the other end of it, it makes me frantic with rage; and then am I more implacably fixed and resolved than ever, to continue taking twenty minutes to telegraph you what I communicate in ten seconds by the new way if I would so debase myself. And when I see a whole silent, solemn drawing-room full of idiots sitting with their hands on each other's foreheads "communing," I tug the white hairs from my head and curse till my asthma brings me the blessed relief of suffocation. In our old day such a gathering talked pure drivel and "rot," mostly, but better that, a thousand times, than these dreary conversational funerals that oppress our spirits in this mad generation.

It is sixty years since I was here before. I walked hither, then, with my precious old friend. It seems incredible, now, that we did it in two days, but such is my recollection. I no longer mention that we walked back in a single day, it makes me so furious to see the doubt in face of the hearer. Men were *men* in those old times.

Think of one of the puerile organisms in this effeminate age attempting such a feat.

My air-ship was delayed by a collision with a fellow from China loaded with the usual cargo of jabbering, copper-colored missionaries, and so I was nearly an hour on my journey. But by the goodness of God thirteen of the missionaries were crippled and several killed, so I was content to lose the time. I love to lose time, anyway, because it brings soothing reminiscences of the creeping railroad days of old, now lost to us forever.

Our game was neatly played, and successfully.—None expected us, of course. You should have seen the guards at the ducal palace stare when I said, "Announce his grace the Archbishop of Dublin and the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hartford." Arrived within, we were all eyes to see the Duke of Cambridge and his Duchess, wondering if we might remember their faces, and they ours. In a moment, they came tottering in; he, bent and withered and bald; she blooming with wholesome old age. He peered through his glasses a moment, then screeched in a reedy voice: "Come to my arms! Away with titles—I'll know ye by no names but Twain and Twichell!" Then fell he on our necks and jammed his trumpet in his ear, the which we filled with shoutings to this effect: "God bless you, old Howells, what is left of you!"

We *talked* late that night—none of your silent idiot "communings" for us—of the olden time. We rolled a stream of ancient anecdotes over our tongues and drank till the lord Archbishop grew so mellow in the mellow past that Dublin ceased to be Dublin to him and resumed its sweeter forgotten name of New York. In truth he almost got back into his ancient religion, too, good Jesuit as he has always been since O'Mulligan the First established that faith in the Empire.

And we canvassed everybody. Bailey Aldrich, Marquis of Ponkapog, came in, got nobly drunk, and told us all about how poor Osgood lost his earldom and was hanged

for conspiring against the second Emperor—but he didn't mention how near he himself came to being hanged, too, for engaging in the same enterprise. He was as chaffy as he was sixty years ago, too, and swore the Archbishop and I never walked to Boston—but there was never a day that Ponkapog wouldn't lie, so be it by the grace of God he got the opportunity.

The Lord High Admiral came in, a hale gentleman close upon seventy and bronzed by the suns and storms of many climes and scarred with the wounds got in many battles, and I told him how I had seen him sit in a high chair and eat fruit and cakes and answer to the name of Johnny. His granddaughter (the eldest) is but lately married to the youngest of the Grand Dukes, and so who knows but a day may come when the blood of the Howells's may reign in the land? I must not forget to say, while I think of it, that your new false teeth are done, my dear, and your wig. Keep your head well bundled with a shawl till the latter comes, and so cheat your persecuting neuralgias and rheumatisms. Would you believe it?—the Duchess of Cambridge is deafer than you—deafer than her husband. They call her to breakfast with a salvo of artillery; and usually when it thunders she looks up expectantly and says "come in. . . ."

The monument to the author of "Gloverson and His Silent Partners" is finished. It is the stateliest and the costliest ever erected to the memory of any man. This noble classic has now been translated into all the languages of the earth and is adored by all nations and known to all creatures. Yet I have conversed as familiarly with the author of it as I do with my own great-grandchildren.

I wish you could see old Cambridge and Ponkapog. I love them as dearly as ever, but privately, my dear, they are not much improvement on idiots. It is melancholy to hear them jabber over the same pointless anecdotes three and four times of an evening, forgetting that they had jabbered them over three or four times the evening

before. Ponkapog still writes poetry, but the old-time fire has mostly gone out of it. Perhaps his best effort of late years is this :

“ O soul, soul, soul of mine.  
Soul, soul, soul of thine !  
Thy soul, my soul, two souls entwined,  
And sing thy lauds in crystal wine ! ”

This he goes about repeating to everybody, daily and nightly, insomuch that he is become a sore affliction to all that know him.

But I must desist. There are drafts here, everywhere, and my gout is something frightful. My left foot hath resemblance to a snuff-bladder.

God be with you.

HARTFORD.

These to Lady Hartford, in the earldom of Hartford, in the upper portion of the city of Dublin.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Dec. 3, 1874.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Let us change the heading to “ Piloting on the Miss in the Old Times ”—or to “ Steam-boating on the M. in Old Times ”—or to “ Personal Old Times on the Miss.”—We could change it for Feb. if now too late for Jan.—I suggest it because the present heading is too pretentious, too broad and general. It seems to command me to deliver a Second Book of Revelation to the world, and cover all the Old Times the Mississippi (dang that word, it is worse than “ type ” or “ Egypt ”) ever saw—whereas here I have finished Article No. III and am about to start on No. 4 and yet I have spoken of nothing but of Piloting as a science so far ; and I doubt if I ever get beyond that portion of my subject. And I don’t care to. Any muggins can write about Old Times on the Miss.

of 500 different kinds, but I am the only man alive that can scribble about the piloting of that day—and no man ever has tried to scribble about it yet. Its newness pleases me all the time—and it is about the only new subject I know of. If I were to write fifty articles they would all be about pilots and piloting—therefore let's get the word Piloting into the heading. There's a sort of freshness about that, too.

Ys ever,

MARK.

But Howells thought the title satisfactory, and indeed it was the best that could have been selected for the series. He wrote every few days of his delight in the papers, and cautioned the author not to make an attempt to please any "supposed Atlantic audience," adding, "Yarn it off into my sympathetic ear." Clemens replied :

*To W. D Howells, in Boston :*

H'tf'd. Dec. 8, 1874.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It isn't the Atlantic audience that distresses me ; for *it* is the only audience that I sit down before in perfect serenity (for the simple reason that it doesn't require a "humorist" to paint himself striped and stand on his head every fifteen minutes.) The trouble was, that I was only bent on "working up an atmosphere" and that is to me a most fidgety and irksome thing, sometimes. I avoid it, usually, but in this case it was absolutely necessary, else every reader would be applying the atmosphere of his own or sea experiences, and *that* shirt wouldn't fit, you know.

I could have sent this Article II a week ago, or more, but I couldn't bring myself to the drudgery of revising and correcting it. I have been at that tedious work 3 hours, now, and by *George* but I am glad it is over.

Say—I am as prompt as a clock, if I only know the *day* a thing is wanted—otherwise I am a natural procrasti-

naturalist. Tell me what day and date you want Nos 3 and 4, and I will tackle and revise them and they'll be there to the minute.

I could wind up with No. 4, but there are some things more which I am powerfully moved to write. Which is natural enough, since I am a person who would quit authorizing in a minute to go to piloting, if the madam would stand it. I would rather sink a steamboat than eat, any time.

My wife was afraid to write you—so I said with simplicity, “*I* will give you the language—and ideas.” Through the infinite grace of God there has not been such another insurrection in the family before as followed this. However, the letter was written, and promptly, too—whereas, heretofore she has *remained* afraid to do such things.

With kind regards to Mrs. Howells,

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The “Old Times” papers appeared each month in the *Atlantic* until July, 1875.

These were the days when the typewriter was new. Clemens and Twichell, during their stay in Boston, had seen the marvel in operation, and Clemens had been unable to resist owning one. It was far from being the perfect machine of to-day; the letters were all capitals, and one was never quite certain, even of those. Mark Twain, however, began with enthusiasm and practised faithfully. On the day of its arrival he wrote two letters that have survived, the first to his brother, the other to Howells.

*Typewritten letter to W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Dec. 9, 1874.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I want to add a short paragraph to article No. 1, when the proof comes. Merely a line or two, however.

I don't know whether I am going to make this type-

writing machine go or nto,: that last word was intended for n-not ; but I guess I shall make some sort of a success of it before I run it very long. I am so thick-fingered that I miss the keys.

You neednt a swer this ; I am only practicing to get three ; *another slip-up there* ; only practici?ng to get the hang of the thing. I notice I miss fire & get in a good many unnecessary letters and punctuation marks. I am simply using you for a target to bang at. Blame my cats but this thing requires genius in order to work it just right.

Yours ever,

(M)ARK.

Orion Clemens had kept his job with Bliss only a short time. His mental make-up was such that it was difficult for him to hold any position long. On the whole, Samuel Clemens was surprisingly patient and considerate with Orion, and there was never a time that he was not willing to help. Yet there were bound to be moments of exasperation ; and once, when his mother, or sister, had written, suggesting that he encourage his brother's efforts, he felt moved to write at considerable freedom.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N.Y. :*

Hartford, Sunday, 1874.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I saw Gov. Jewell today and he said he was still moving in the matter of Sammy's appointment<sup>1</sup> and would stick to it till he got a result of a positive nature one way or the other, but thus far he did not know whether to expect success or defeat.

Ma, whenever you need money I hope you won't be backward about saying so—you can always have it. We stint ourselves in some ways, but we have no desire to stint you. And we don't intend to, either.

I *can't* "encourage" Orion. Nobody can do that, conscientiously, for the reason that before one's letter has

<sup>1</sup> As a West Point cadet.



time to reach him he is off on some new wild-goose chase.—Would you encourage in literature a man who, the older he grows, the worse he writes? Would you encourage Orion in the glaring insanity of studying law? If he were packed and crammed full of law, it would be worthless lumber to him, for his is such a capricious and ill-regulated mind that he would apply the principles of the law with no more judgment than a child of ten years. I know what I am saying. I laid one of the plainest and simplest of legal questions before Orion once, and the helpless and hopeless mess he made of it was absolutely astonishing. Nothing aggravates me so much as to have Orion mention law or literature to me.

Well, I cannot encourage him to try the ministry, because he would change his religion so fast that he would have to keep a travelling agent under wages to go ahead of him to engage pulpits and board for him.

I cannot conscientiously encourage him to do *anything* but potter around his little farm and put in his odd hours contriving new and impossible projects at the rate of 365 a year—which is his customary average. He says he did well in Hannibal! Now there is a man who ought to be entirely satisfied with the grandeurs, emoluments and activities of a hen farm—

If you ask me to pity Orion, I can do that. I can do it every day and all day long. But one can't "encourage" quick-silver, because the instant you put your finger on it it isn't there. No, I am saying too much—he *does* stick to his literary and legal aspirations; and he naturally *would* select the very two things which he is wholly and preposterously unfitted for. If I ever become able, I mean to put Orion on a regular pension without revealing the fact that it is a pension. That is best for him. Let him consider it a periodical loan, and pay interest out of the principal. Within a year's time he would be looking upon himself as a benefactor of mine, in the way of furnishing me a good permanent investment for money, and that

would make him happy and satisfied with himself. If he had money he would share with me in a moment and I have no disposition to be stingy with *him*.

Affly

SAM.

Livy sends love.

The New Orleans plan was not wholly dead at this time. Howells wrote near the end of January that the matter was still being debated, now and then, but was far from being decided upon. He hoped to go somewhere with Mrs. Howells for a brief time in March, he said. Clemens, in haste, replied :

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Jan. 26, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—When Mrs. Clemens read your letter she said : “ Well, then, wherever they go, in March, the direction will be southward and so they must give us a visit on the way.” I do not know what sort of control you may be under, but when my wife speaks as positively as that, I am not in the habit of talking back and getting into trouble. Situated as I am, I would not be able to understand, now, how you could pass by this town without feeling that you were running a wanton risk and doing a daredevil thing. I consider it settled that you are to come in March, and I would be sincerely sorry to learn that you and Mrs. Howells feel differently about it.

The piloting material has been uncovering itself by degrees, until it has exposed such a huge hoard to my view that a whole book will be required to contain it if I use it. So I have agreed to write the book for Bliss.<sup>1</sup> I won't be able to run the articles in the Atlantic later than the September number, for the reason that a subscription book issued in the fall has a much larger sale than if issued at any other season of the year. It is funny when I reflect that when I originally wrote you and proposed to do from

<sup>1</sup> The book idea was later given up for the time being.

6 to 9 articles for the magazine, the vague thought in my mind was that 6 might exhaust the material and 9 would be pretty sure to do it. Or rather it *seems* to me that that was my thought—can't tell at this distance. But in truth 9 chapters don't now seem to more than open up the subject fairly and start the yarn to wagging.

I have been sick a-bed several days, for the first time in 21 years. How little confirmed invalids appreciate their advantages. I was able to read the English edition of the Greville Memoirs through without interruption, take my meals in bed, neglect all business without a pang, and smoke 18 cigars a day. I try not to look back upon these 21 years with a feeling of resentment, and yet the partialities of Providence do seem to me to be slathered around (as one may say) without that gravity and attention to detail which the real importance of the matter would seem to suggest.

Yrs ever

MARK.

*To Mrs. W.D. Howells, in Boston :*

1875.

DEAR MRS. HOWELLS,—Mrs. Clemens is delighted to get the pictures, and so am I. I can perceive in the group, that Mr. Howells is feeling as I so often feel, viz :—" Well, no doubt I am in the wrong, though I do not know how or where or why—but anyway it will be safest to look meek, and walk circumspectly for a while, and not *discuss* the thing." And you look exactly as Mrs. Clemens does after she has said, " Indeed I do not *wonder* that you can frame no reply : for you know only too well that your conduct admits of no excuse, palliation or argument—*none !* "

I shall just delight in that group on account of the good old human domestic spirit that pervades it—both these family groups that put on a state aspect to get their pictures taken in

*We* want a heliotype made of *our* eldest daughter. How soft and rich and lovely the picture is. Mr. Howells must tell me how to proceed in the matter.

Truly yours

SAM. L. CLEMENS.

In the next letter we have a picture of Susy<sup>1</sup> Clemens's third birthday. The letter is to her uncle Charles Langdon, the "Charlie" of the *Quaker City*. "Atwater" was associated with the Langdon coal interests in Elmira. "The play" is, of course, "The Gilded Age."

*To Charles Langdon, in Elmira :*

McH. 19, 1875.

DEAR CHARLIE,—Livy, after reading your letter, used her severest form of expression about Mr. Atwater—to wit: She did not "*approve*" of his conduct. This made me shudder; for it was equivalent to Allie Spaulding's saying "Mr. Atwater is a *mean thing*;" or Rev. Thomas Beecher's saying "Damn that Atwater," or my saying "I wish Atwater was three hundred million miles in——!"

However, Livy does not often get into one of these furies, God be thanked.

In Brooklyn, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Chicago, the play paid me an average of nine hundred dollars a week. In smaller towns the average is \$400 to \$500.

This is Susie's birth-day. Lizzie brought her in at 8.30 this morning (before we were up) hooded with a blanket, red curl-papers in her hair, a great red japonica in one hand (for Livy) and a yellow rose-bud nestled in violets (for my buttonhole) in the other—and she looked wonderfully pretty. She delivered her memorials and received her birth-day kisses. Livy laid her japonica down to get a better "holt" for kissing—which Susie presently per-

<sup>1</sup> This spelling of the name was adopted somewhat later and much preferred. It appears as "Susie" in most of the earlier letters.

ceived, and became thoughtful : and then said sorrowfully, turning the great deeps of her eyes upon her mother, " Don't you care for you wow ? "

Right after breakfast we got up a rousing wood fire in the main hall (it is a cold morning), illuminated the place with a rich glow from all the globes of the newell chandelier, spread a bright rug before the fire, set a circling row of chairs (pink ones and dove-colored) and in the midst a low invalid-table covered with a fanciful cloth and laden with the presents—a pink azalea in lavish bloom from Rosa ; a gold inscribed Russia-leather bible from Patrick and Mary ; a gold ring (inscribed) from " Maggy Cook ; " a silver thimble (inscribed with motto and initials) from Lizzie ; a rattling mob of Sunday clad dolls from Livy and Annie, and a Noah's Ark from me, containing 200 wooden animals such as only a human being could create and only God call by name without referring to the passenger list. Then the family and the seven servants assembled there, and Susie and the " Bay " arrived in state from above, the Bay's head being fearfully and wonderfully decorated with a profusion of blazing red flowers and overflowing cataracts of lycopodium. Wee congratulatory notes accompanied the presents of the servants. I tell you it was a great occasion and a striking and cheery group, taking all the surroundings into account and the wintry aspect outside.

(Remainder missing.)

There was to be a centennial celebration that year of the battles of Lexington and Concord, and Howells wrote, urging Clemens and his wife to visit them and attend it. Mrs. Clemens did not go, and Clemens and Howells did not go, either—to the celebration. They had their own ideas about getting there, but found themselves unable to board the thronged tram at Concord, and went tramping about in the cold and mud, hunting a conveyance, only to return at length to the cheer of the home, defeated and rather low in spirits.

Twichell, who went on his own hook, had no such difficulties. To Howells, Mark Twain wrote the adventures of this athletic and strenuous exponent of the gospel.

The "Winnie" mentioned in this letter was Howells's daughter Winifred. She had unusual gifts, but did not live to develop them.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Farmington Avenue, Hartford. Apl. 23, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I've got Mrs. Clemens's picture before me, and hope I shall not forget to send it with this.

Joe Twichell preached morning and evening here last Sunday ; took midnight train for Boston ; got an early breakfast and started by rail at 7.30 a. m. for Concord ; swelled around there until 1 p. m., seeing everything ; then traveled *on top* of a train to Lexington ; saw everything there ; traveled on top of a train to Boston, (with hundreds in company) deluged with dust, smoke and cinders ; yelled and hurrahed all the way like a school-boy ; lay flat down to dodge numerous bridges, and sailed into the depot, howling with excitement and as black as a chimney-sweep ; got to Young's Hotel at 7 p. m. ; sat down in reading-room and immediately feel asleep ; was promptly awakened by a porter who supposed he was drunk ; wandered around an hour and a half ; then took 9 p. m. train, sat down in smoking car and remembered nothing more until awakened by conductor as the train came into Hartford at 1.30 a. m. Thinks he had simply a glorious time—and wouldn't have missed the Centennial for the world. He would have run out to see us a moment at Cambridge, but was too dirty. I wouldn't have wanted him there—his appalling energy would have been an insufferable reproach to mild adventurers like you and me.

Well, he is welcome to the good time he had—I had a deal better one. My narrative has made Mrs. Clemens wish she could have been there.—When I think over what a splendid good sociable time I had in your house I feel ever so thankful to the wise providence that thwarted our several ably-planned and ingenious attempts to get to

Lexington. I am coming again before long, and then she shall be of the party.

Now you said that you and Mrs. Howells could run down here nearly any Saturday. Very well then, let us call it next Saturday, for a "starter." Can you do that? By that time it will really be spring and you won't freeze. The birds are already out; a small one paid us a visit yesterday. We entertained it and let it go again, Susie protesting.

The spring laziness is already upon me—inso much that the spirit begins to move me to cease from Mississippi articles and everything else and give myself over to idleness until we go to New Orleans. I have one article already finished, but somehow it doesn't seem as proper a chapter to close with as the one already in your hands. I hope to get in a mood and rattle off a *good* one to finish with—but just now all my moods are lazy ones.

Winnie's literature sings through me yet! Surely that child has one of these "futures" before her.

Now try to come—will you?

With the warmest regards of the two of us—

Yrs ever,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The Clemens family remained in Hartford that summer, with the exception of a brief season at Bateman's Point, R. I., near Newport. By this time Mark Twain had taken up and finished the *Tom Sawyer* story begun two years before. Naturally he wished Howells to consider the MS.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, July 5th, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have finished the story and didn't take the chap beyond boyhood. I believe it would be fatal to do it in any shape but autobiographically—like *Gil Blas*. I perhaps made a mistake in not writing it in the first person. If I went on, now, and took him

into manhood, he would just lie like all the one-horse men in literature and the reader would conceive a hearty contempt for him. It is *not* a boy's book, at all. It will only be read by adults. It is only written for adults.

Moreover the book is plenty long enough as it stands. It is about 900 pages of MS, and may be 1000 when I shall have finished "working up" vague places; so it would make from 130 to 150 pages of the Atlantic—about what the Foregone Conclusion made, isn't it?

I would dearly like to see it in the Atlantic, but I doubt if it would pay the publishers to buy the privilege, or me to sell it. Bret Harte has sold his novel (same size as mine, I should say) to Scribner's Monthly for \$6,500 (publication to begin in September, I think) and he gets a royalty of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent from Bliss in book form afterwards. He gets a royalty of ten per cent on it in England (issued in serial numbers) and the same royalty on it in book form afterwards, and is to receive an advance payment of five hundred pounds the day the first No. of the serial appears. If I could do as well, here, and there, with mine, it might possibly pay me, but I seriously doubt it—though it is likely I could do better in England than Bret, who is not widely known there.

You see I take a vile, mercenary view of things—but then my household expenses are something almost ghastly.

By and by I shall take a boy of twelve and run him on through life (in the first person) but not Tom Sawyer—he would not be a good character for it.

I wish you would promise to read the MS of Tom Sawyer some time, and see if you don't really decide that I am right in closing with him as a boy—and point out the most glaring defects for me. It is a tremendous favor to ask, and I expect you to refuse and would be ashamed to expect you to do otherwise. But the thing has been so many months in my mind that it seems a relief to snake it out. I don't know any other person whose judgment I could venture to take fully and entirely. Don't hesitate





MARK TWAIN AT HARTFORD ABOUT 1875



about saying no, for I know how your time is taxed, and I would have honest need to blush if you said yes.

Osgood and I are "going for" the puppy G—— on infringement of trademark. To win one or two suits of this kind will set literary folks on a firmer bottom. I wish Osgood would sue for stealing Holmes's poem. Wouldn't it be gorgeous to sue R—— for *petty larceny*? I will promise to go into court and swear I think him capable of stealing pea-nuts from a blind pedlar.

Yrs ever,

CLEMENS.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

July 13, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Just as soon as you consented I realized all the atrocity of my request, and straightway blushed and weakened. I telegraphed my theatrical agent to come here and carry off the MS and copy it.

But I will gladly send it to you if you will do as follows : dramatize it, if you perceive that you can, and take, for your remuneration, half of the first \$6000 which I receive for its representation on the stage. You could alter the plot entirely, if you choose. I could help in the work, most cheerfully, after you had arranged the plot. I have my eye upon two young girls who can play "Tom" and "Huck." I believe a good deal of a drama can be made of it. Come—can't you tackle this in the odd hours of your vacation? or later, if you prefer?

I do wish you could come down once more before your holiday. I'd give anything!

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Howells wrote that he had no time for the dramatization and urged Clemens to undertake it himself. He was ready to read the story, whenever it should arrive. Clemens did not hurry, however. The publication of *Tom Sawyer* could wait.

He already had a book in press—the volume of *Sketches New and Old*, which he had prepared for Bliss several years before.

Considered among Mark Twain's books to-day, the collection of sketches does not seem especially important. Clemens himself confessed to Howells that he wished, when it was too late, that he had destroyed a number of them. The book, however, was distinguished in a special way: it contains Mark Twain's first utterance in print on the subject of copyright, a matter in which he never again lost interest. The absurdity and injustice of the copyright laws both amused and irritated him, and in the course of time he would be largely instrumental in their improvement. In the book his open petition to Congress that all property rights, as well as literary ownership, should be put on the copyright basis and limited to a "beneficent term of forty-two years," was more or less of a joke, but, like so many of Mark Twain's jokes, it was founded on reason and justice.

He had another idea, that was not a joke: an early plan in the direction of international copyright. It was to be a petition signed by the leading American authors, asking the United States to declare itself to be the first to stand for right and justice by enacting laws against the piracy of foreign books. It was a rather utopian scheme, as most schemes for moral progress are, in their beginning. It would not be likely ever to reach Congress, but it would appeal to Howells and his Cambridge friends. Clemens wrote, outlining his plan of action.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Sept. 18, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—My plan is this—you are to get Mr. Lowell and Mr. Longfellow to be the first signers of my copyright petition; you must sign it yourself and get Mr. Whittier to do likewise. Then Holmes will sign—he said he would if he didn't have to stand at the head. Then I'm fixed. I will then put a gentlemanly chap under wages and send him personally to every author of distinction in the country, and corral the rest of the signatures. Then I'll have the whole thing lithographed (about a thousand copies) and move upon the President and Congress *in person*, but in the subordinate capacity of a

party who is merely the agent of better and wiser men—men whom the country cannot venture to laugh at.

I will ask the President to recommend the thing in his message (and if he should ask me to sit down and frame the paragraph for him I should blush—but still I would frame it).

Next I would get a prime leader in Congress; I would also see that votes enough to carry the measure were privately secured before the bill was offered. This I would try through my leader and my friends there.

And *then* if Europe chose to go on stealing from us, we would say with noble enthusiasm, “American law-makers *do steal*—but not from foreign authors—not from foreign authors!”

You see, what I want to drive into the Congressional mind is the simple fact that the moral law is “*Thou shalt not steal*”—no matter what Europe may do.

I swear I can’t see any use in robbing European authors for the benefit of American booksellers, anyway.

If we can ever get this thing through Congress, we can try making copyright *perpetual*, some day. There would be no sort of use in it, since only one book in a hundred millions outlives the present copyright term—no sort of use except that the writer of that one book have his *rights*—which is something.

If we only had some God in the country’s laws, instead of being in such a sweat to get Him into the Constitution, it would be better all around.

The only man who ever signed my petition with alacrity, and said that the fact that a thing was *right* was all-sufficient, was Rev. Dr. Bushnell.

I have lost my old petition, (which was brief) but will draft and enclose another—not in the words it ought to be, but in the substance. I want Mr. Lowell to furnish the words (and the ideas too,) if he will do it.

Say—Redpath *beseeches* me to lecture in Boston in November—telegraphs that Beecher’s and Nast’s with-

drawal has put him in the tightest kind of a place. So I guess I'll do that old "Roughing It" lecture over again in November and repeat it 2 or 3 times in New York while I am at it.

Can I take a carriage after the lecture and go out and stay with you that night, provide you find at that distant time that it will not inconvenience you? Is Aldrich home yet?

With love to you all—

Yrs ever,

S. L. C.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Oct. 4, '75.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We had a royal good time at your house, and have had a royal good time ever since, talking about it, both privately and with the neighbors. Mrs. Clemens's bodily strength came up handsomely under that cheery respite from household and nursery cares. I do hope that Mrs. Howells's didn't go correspondingly down, under the added burden to *her* cares and responsibilities. Of course I didn't expect to get through without committing some crimes and hearing of them afterwards, so I have taken the inevitable lashings and been able to hum a tune while the punishment went on. I "caught it" for letting Mrs. Howells bother and bother about her coffee when it was "a good deal better than we get at home." I "caught it" for interrupting Mrs. C. at the last moment and losing her the opportunity to urge you not to forget to send her that MS when the printers are done with it. I "caught it" once more for personating that drunken Col. James. I "caught it" for mentioning that Mr. Longfellow's picture was slightly damaged; and when, after a lull in the storm, I confessed shame-facedly, that I had privately suggested to you that we hadn't any *frames*, and that if you wouldn't mind

hinting to Mr. Houghton, &c., &c., &c., the Madam was simply speechless for the space of a minute. Then she said :

“How *could* you, Youth ! The idea of sending Mr. Howells, with his sensitive nature, upon such a repulsive err——”

“Oh, *Howells* won't mind it ! You don't know *Howells*. *Howells* is a man who——” She was gone. But George was the first person she stumbled on in the hall, so she took it out of George. I was glad of that, because it saved the babies.

I've got another rattling good character for my novel ! That great work is mulling itself into shape gradually.

Mrs. Clemens sends love to Mrs. *Howells*—meantime she is diligently laying up material for a letter to her.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The “George” of this letter was Mark Twain's coloured butler, a valued and even beloved member of the household—a most picturesque character, who “one day came to wash windows,” as Clemens used to say, “and remained eighteen years.” The fiction of Mrs. Clemens's severity he always found amusing, because of its entire contrast with the reality of her gentle heart.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Nov. 23, '75.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Herewith is the proof. In spite of myself, how awkwardly I do jumble words together ; and how often I do use three words where one would answer—a thing I am always trying to guard against. I shall become as slovenly a writer as Charles Francis Adams, if I don't look out. (That is said in jest ; because of course I do not seriously fear getting so bad as that. I never shall drop so far toward his and Bret Harte's level as to catch myself saying “It must have been wiser to have believed that he might have accomplished it if he could have felt that he would have been supported by

those who would have &c. &c. &c.”) The reference to Bret Harte reminds me that I often accuse him of being a deliberate imitator of Dickens; and this in turn reminds me that I have charged unconscious plagiarism upon Charley Warner; and *this* in turn reminds me that I have been delighting my soul for two weeks over a bran-new and ingenious way of beginning a novel—and behold, all at once is flashes upon me that *Charley Warner* originated the idea 3 years ago and told me about it! Aha! So much for self-righteousness! I am well repaid. Here are 108 pages of MS, new and clean, lying disgraced in the waste paper basket, and I am beginning the novel over again in an unstolen way. I would not wonder if I am the worst literary thief in the world, without knowing it.

It is glorious news that you like Tom Sawyer so well. I mean to see to it that your review of it shall have plenty of time to appear before the other notices. Mrs. Clemens decides with you that the book should issue as a book for boys, pure and simple—and so do I. It is surely the correct idea. As to that last chapter, I think of just leaving it off and adding nothing in its place. Something told me that the book was done when I got to that point—and so the strong temptation to put Huck’s life at the Widow’s into detail, instead of generalizing it in a paragraph was resisted. Just send Sawyer to me by express—I enclose money for it. If it should get lost it will be no great matter.

Company interfered last night, and so “Private Theatricals” goes over till this evening, to be read aloud. Mrs. Clemens is mad, but the story will take *that* all out. This is going to be a splendid winter night for fireside reading, anyway.

I am almost at a dead stand-still with my new story, on account of the misery of having to do it all over again.

We-all send love to you-all.

Yrs ever

MARK.



*To Mrs. Clemens on her Thirtieth Birthday :*

Hartford, November 27, 1875.

Livy darling, six years have gone by since I made my first great success in life and won you, and thirty years have passed since Providence made preparation for that happy success by sending you into the world. Every day we live together adds to the security of my confidence that we can never any more wish to be separated than that we can ever imagine a regret that we were ever joined. You are dearer to me to-day, my child, than you were upon the last anniversary of this birth-day; you were dearer then than you were a year before—you have grown more and more dear from the first of those anniversaries, and I do not doubt that this precious progression will continue on to the end.

Let us look forward to the coming anniversaries, with their age and their gray hairs without fear and without depression, trusting and believing that the love we bear each other will be sufficient to make them blessed.

So, with abounding affection for you and our babies, I hail this day that brings you the matronly grace and dignity of three decades !

Always Yours

S. L. C.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Jan. 18, '76.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Thanks and ever so many, for the good opinion of Tom Sawyer. Williams has made about 300 rattling pictures for it—some of them very dainty. Poor devil, what a genius he has and how he does murder it with rum. He takes a book of mine, and without suggestion from anybody builds no end of pictures just from his reading of it.

There was never a man in the world so grateful to another as I was to you day before yesterday, when I sat

down (in still rather wretched health) to set myself to the dreary and hateful task of making final revision of Tom Sawyer, and discovered, upon opening the package of MS that your pencil marks were scattered all along. This was splendid, and swept away all labor. Instead of *reading* the MS, I simply hunted out the pencil marks and made the emendations which they suggested. I reduced the boy battle to a curt paragraph; I finally concluded to cut the Sunday school speech down to the first two sentences, leaving no suggestion of satire, since the book is to be for boys and girls; I tamed the various obscenities until I judged that they no longer carried offense. So, at a single sitting I began and finished a revision which I had supposed would occupy 3 or 4 days and leave me mentally and physically fagged out at the end. I was careful not to inflict the MS upon you until I had thoroughly and painstakingly revised it. Therefore, the only faults left were those that would discover themselves to others, not me—and these you had pointed out.

There was one expression which perhaps you overlooked. When Huck is complaining to Tom of the rigorous system in vogue at the widow's, he says the servants harass him with all manner of compulsory decencies, and he winds up by saying: "and they comb me all to hell." (No exclamation point.) Long ago, when I read that to Mrs. Clemens, she made no comment; another time I created occasion to read that chapter to her aunt and her mother (both sensitive and loyal subjects of the kingdom of heaven, so to speak) and *they* let it pass. I was glad, for it was the most natural remark in the world for that boy to make (and he had been allowed few privileges of speech in the book;) when I saw that you, too, had let it go without protest, I was glad, and afraid, too—afraid you hadn't observed it. Did you? And did you question the propriety of it? Since the book is now professedly and confessedly a boy's and girl's book, that darn word bothers

me some, nights, but it never did until I had ceased to regard the volume as being for adults.

Don't bother to answer *now*, (for you've writing enough to do without allowing me to add to the burden,) but tell me when you see me again ?

Which we do hope will be next Saturday or Sunday or Monday. Couldn't you come now and mull over the alterations which you are going to make in your MS, and make them after you go back ? Wouldn't it assist the work if you dropped out of harness and routine for a day or two and have that sort of revivification which comes of a holiday—forgetfulness of the work-shop ? I can always work after I've been to your house ; and if you will come to mine, now, and hear the club toot their various horns over the exasperating metaphysical question which I mean to lay before them in the disguise of a literary extravaganza, it would just brace you up like a cordial.

(I feel sort of mean trying to persuade a man to put down a critical piece of work at a critical time, but yet I am honest in thinking it would not hurt the work nor impair your interest in it to come under the circumstances.) Mrs. Clemens says, "Maybe the Howellses could come *Monday* if they cannot come Saturday ; ask them ; it is worth trying." Well, how's that ? *Could* you ? It would be splendid if you could. Drop me a postal card—I should have a twinge of conscience if I forced you to write a letter, (I am honest about that,)—and if you find you can't make out to come, tell me that you bodies will come the *next* Saturday if the thing is possible, and stay over Sunday.

Yrs ever

MARK.

Howells, however, did not come to the club meeting but promised to come soon when they could have a quiet time to themselves together. As to Huck's language, he declared : " I'd have that swearing out in an instant. I suppose I didn't

notice it because the locution was so familiar to my Western sense, and so exactly the thing that Huck would say." Clemens changed the phrase to, "They comb me all to thunder," and so it stands to-day. Meantime Howells had written his *Atlantic* notice of *Tom Sawyer*, and now enclosed Clemens a proof of it. We may judge from the reply that it was satisfactory.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Apl. 3, '76.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It is a splendid notice and will embolden weak-kneed journalistic admirers to speak out, and will modify or shut up the unfriendly. To "fear God and dread the Sunday school" exactly described that old feeling which I used to have, but I couldn't have formulated it. I want to enclose one of the illustrations in this letter, if I do not forget it. Of course the book is to be elaborately illustrated, and I think that many of the pictures are considerably above the American average, in conception if not in execution.

I do not re-enclose your review to you, for you have evidently read and corrected it, and so I judge you do not need it. About two days after the *Atlantic* issues I mean to begin to send books to principal journals and magazines. . . .

Mrs. Clemens has returned from New York with dreadful sore throat, and bones racked with rheumatism. She keeps her bed. "Aloha nui!" as the Kanakas say.

MARK.

Henry Irving once said to Mark Twain: "You made a mistake by not adopting the stage as a profession. You would have made even a greater actor than a writer."

Mark Twain would have made an actor, certainly, but not a very tractable one. His appearance in Hartford in "The Loan of a Lover" was a distinguished event, and his success complete, though he made so many extemporaneous improvements on the lines of thick-headed Peter Spuyk, that he kept the other actors guessing as to their cues, and nearly broke up the performance. It was, of course, an amateur benefit, though

Augustin Daly promptly wrote, offering to put it on for a long run.

The "skeleton novelette" mentioned in the next letter refers to a plan concocted by Howells and Clemens, by which each of twelve authors was to write a story, using the same plot, "blindfolded" as to what the others had written. It was a regular "Mark Twain" notion, and it is hard to-day to imagine Howells's continued enthusiasm in it. Neither he nor Clemens gave up the idea for a long time.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Apl. 22, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—You'll see per enclosed slip that I appear for the first time on the stage next Wednesday. You and Mrs. H. come down and you shall skip in free.

I wrote my skeleton novelette yesterday and today. It will make a little under 12 pages.

Please tell Aldrich I've got a photographer engaged, and tri-weekly issue is about to begin. Show him the canvassing specimens and beseech him to subscribe.

Ever yours,

S. L. C.

In his next letter Mark Twain explains why *Tom Sawyer* is not to appear as soon as planned. The reference to "The Literary Nightmare" refers to the "Punch, Conductor, Punch with Care" sketch, which had recently appeared in the *Atlantic*. Many other versifiers had had their turn at horse-car poetry, and now a publisher was anxious to collect it in a book, provided he could use the *Atlantic* sketch. Clemens does not tell us here the nature of Carlton's insult, forgiveness of which he was not yet qualified to grant, but there are at least two stories about it, or two halves of the same incident, as related afterward by Clemens and Carlton. Clemens said that when he took the *Jumping Frog* book to Carlton, in 1867, the latter, pointing to his stock, said, rather scornfully: "Books? I don't *want* your book; my shelves are *full* of books now," though the reader may remember that it was Carlton himself who had given the frog story to the *Saturday Press* and had seen it become famous. Carlton's half of the story was that he did not accept Mark Twain's book because the author looked so disreputable. Long

afterwards, when the two men met in Europe, the publisher said to the now rich and famous author: "Mr. Clemens, my one claim on immortality is that I declined your first book."

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Apl. 25, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Thanks for giving me the place of honor.

Bliss made a failure in the matter of getting Tom Sawyer ready on time—the engravers assisting, as usual. I went down to see how much of a delay there was going to be, and found that the man had not even put a canvasser on, or issued an advertisement yet—in fact, that the electrotypes would not all be done for a month! But of course the main fact was that no canvassing had been done—because a subscription harvest is *before* publication, (not *after*, when people have discovered how bad one's book is.)

Well, yesterday I put in the Courant an editorial paragraph stating that Tom Sawyer is "ready to issue, but publication is put off in order to secure English copy-right by simultaneous publication there and here. The English edition is unavoidably delayed."

You see, part of that is true. Very well. When I observed that my "Sketches" had dropped from a sale of 6 or 7000 a month down to 1200 a month, I said "*this* ain't no time to be publishing books; therefore, let Tom lie still till Autumn, Mr. Bliss, and make a holiday book of him to beguile the young people withal."

I shall print items occasionally, still further delaying Tom, till I ease him down to Autumn without shock to the waiting world.

As to that "Literary Nightmare" proposition. I'm obliged to withhold consent, for what seems a good reason—to wit: A single page of horse-car poetry is all that the average reader can stand, without nausea; now, to

stack together *all* of it that has been written, and then add it to my article would be to enrage and disgust each and every reader and win the deathless enmity of the lot.

Even if that reason were insufficient, there would still be a sufficient reason left, in the fact that Mr. Carlton seems to be the publisher of the magazine in which it is proposed to publish this horse-car matter. Carlton insulted me in Feb. 1867, and so when the day arrives that sees me doing him a civility I shall feel that I am ready for Paradise, since my list of possible and impossible forgivenesses will then be complete.

Mrs. Clemens says my version of the blindfold novelette "A Murder and A Marriage" is "good." Pretty strong language—for her.

The Fieldses are coming down to the play tomorrow, and they promise to get you and Mrs. Howells to come too, but I hope you'll do nothing of the kind if it will inconvenience you, for I'm not going to play either strikingly bad enough or well enough to make the journey pay you.

My wife and I think of going to Boston May 7th to see Anna Dickinson's debut on the 8th. If I find we can go, I'll try to get a stage box and then you and Mrs. Howells must come to Parker's and go with us to the crucifixion.

(Is that spelt right?—somehow it doesn't *look* right.)

With our very kindest regards to the whole family.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The mention of Anna Dickinson, at the end of this letter, recalls a prominent reformer and lecturer of the Civil War period. She had begun her crusades against temperance and slavery in 1857, when she was but fifteen years old, when her success as a speaker had been immediate and extraordinary. Now, in this later period, at the age of thirty-four, she aspired to the stage—unfortunately for her, as her gifts lay elsewhere.

From May until August no letters appear to have passed between Clemens and Howells; the latter finally wrote, complaining of the lack of news. He was in the midst of campaign

activities, he said, writing a life of Hayes, and gaily added: "You know I wrote the life of Lincoln, which elected him." He further reported a comedy he had completed, and gave Clemens a general stirring up as to his own work.

Mark Twain, in his hillside study, was busy enough. Summer was his time for work, and he had tried his hand in various directions. His mention of Huck Finn in his reply to Howells is interesting, in that it shows the measure of his enthusiasm, or lack of it, as a gauge of his ultimate achievement.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, Aug. 9, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I was just about to write you when your letter came—and not one of those obscene postal cards, either, but reverently, upon paper.

I shall read that biography, though the letter of acceptance was amply sufficient to corral my vote without any further knowledge of the man. Which reminds me that a campaign club in Jersey City wrote a few days ago and invited me to be present at the raising of a Tilden and Hendricks flag there, and to take the stand and give them some "counsel." Well, I could not go, but gave them counsel and advice by letter, and in the kindest terms as to the raising of the flag—advised them—"not to raise it."

Get your book out quick, for this is a momentous time. If Tilden is elected I think the entire country will go pretty straight to—Mrs. Howells's bad place.

I am infringing on your patent—I started a record of our children's sayings, last night. Which reminds me that last week I sent down and got Susie a vast pair of shoes of a most villainous pattern, for I discovered that her feet were being twisted and cramped out of shape by a smaller and prettier article. She did not complain, but looked degraded and injured. At night her mamma gave her the usual admonition when she was about to say her prayers—to wit :

"Now, Susie—think about God."



“Mamma, I can’t, with those shoes.”

The farm is perfectly delightful this season. It is as quiet and peaceful as a South Sea Island. Some of the sunsets which we have witnessed from this commanding eminence were marvelous. One evening a rainbow spanned an entire range of hills with its mighty arch, and from a black hub resting upon the hill-top in the exact centre, *black* rays diverged upward in perfect regularity to the rainbow’s arch and created a very strongly defined and altogether the most majestic, magnificent and startling half-sunk wagon wheel you can imagine. After that, a world of tumbling and prodigious clouds came drifting up out of the West and took to themselves a wonderfully rich and brilliant *green* color—the decided green of new spring foliage. Close by them we saw the intense blue of the skies, through rents in the cloud-rack, and away off in another quarter were drifting clouds of a delicate pink color. In one place hung a pall of dense black clouds, like compacted pitch-smoke. And the stupendous wagon wheel was still in the supremacy of its unspeakable grandeur. So you see, the colors present in the sky at one and the same time were blue, green, pink, black, and the vari-colored splendors of the rainbow. All strong and decided colors, too. I don’t know whether this weird and astounding spectacle most suggested heaven, or hell. The wonder, with its constant, stately, and always surprising changes, lasted upwards of two hours, and we all stood on the top of the hill by my study till the final miracle was complete and the greatest day ended that we ever saw.

Our farmer, who is a grave man, watched that spectacle to the end, and then observed that it was “dam funny.”

The double-barreled novel lies torpid. I found I could not go on with it. The chapters I had written were still too new and familiar to me. I may take it up next winter, but cannot tell yet; I waited and waited to see if my interest in it would not revive, but gave it up a month

ago and began another boys' book—more to be at work than anything else. I have written 400 pages on it—therefore it is very nearly half done. It is Huck Finn's Autobiography. I like it only tolerably well, as far as I have got, and may possibly pigeonhole or burn the MS when it is done.

So the comedy is done, and with a "fair degree of satisfaction." That rejoices me, and makes me mad, too—for I can't plan a comedy, and what have you done that God should be so good to you? I have racked myself bald-headed trying to plan a comedy harness for some promising characters of mine to work in, and had to give it up. It is a noble lot of blooded stock and worth no end of money, but they must stand in the stable and be profitless. I want to be present when the comedy is produced and help enjoy the success.

Warner's book is mighty readable, I think.

Love to yez.

Yrs. ever

MARK.

Howells promptly wrote again, urging him to enter the campaign for Hayes. "There is not another man in this country," he said, "who could help him so much as you." The "farce" which Clemens refers to in his reply, was "The Parlour Car," which seems to have been about the first venture of Howells in that field.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, August 23, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I am glad you think I could do Hayes any good, for I have been wanting to write a letter or make a speech to that end. I'll be careful not to do either, however, until the opportunity comes in a natural, justifiable and unugged way; and shall not then do anything unless I've got it all digested and worded just right.

In which case I *might* do some good—in any other I should do harm. When a humorist ventures upon the grave concerns of life he must do his job better than another man or he works harm to his cause.

The farce is wonderfully bright and delicious, and *must* make a hit. You read it to me, and it was mighty good ; I read it last night and it was better ; I read it aloud to the household this morning and it was better than ever. So it would be worth going a long way to see it well played ; for without any question an actor of genius always adds a subtle something to any man’s work that none but the writer knew was there before. Even if *he* knew it. I have heard of readers convulsing audiences with my “ Aureha’s Unfortunate Young Man.” If there is anything really funny in the piece, the author is not aware of it.

All right—advertise me for the new volume. I send you herewith a sketch which will make  $3\frac{1}{2}$  pages of the *Atlantic*. If you like it and accept it, you should get it into the *December* No. because I shall read it in public in Boston the 13th and 14th of Nov. If it went in a month earlier it would be too old for me to read except as old matter ; and if it went in a month later it would be too old for the *Atlantic*—do you see ? And if you wish to use it, will you set it up *now*, and send me three proofs ? —one to correct for *Atlantic*, one to send to Temple Bar (shall I tell them to use it not earlier than their November No ?) and one to use in practising for my Boston readings.

We must get up a less elaborate and a much better skeleton-plan for the Blindfold Novels and make a success of that idea. David Gray spent Sunday here and said we could but little comprehend what a rattling stir that thing would make in the country. He thought it would make a mighty strike. So do I. But with only 8 pages to tell the tale in, the plot must be less elaborate, doubtless. What do you think ?

When we exchange visits I’ll show you an unfinished

sketch of Elizabeth's time which shook David Gray's system up pretty exhaustively.

Yrs ever, MARK.

The MS. sketch mentioned in the foregoing letter was "The Canvasser's Tale," later included in the volume, *Tom Sawyer Abroad, and Other Stories*. David Gray was an able journalist and editor whom Mark Twain had known in Buffalo. The "sketch of Elizabeth's time" is a brilliant piece of writing—an imaginary record of conversation and court manners in the good old days of free speech and performance, phrased in the language of the period.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Sept. 14, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I will not, and do not, believe that there is a possibility of Hayes's defeat, but I want the victory to be sweeping. . . .

It seems odd to find myself interested in an election. I never was before. And I can't seem to get over my repugnance to reading or thinking about politics, yet. But in truth I care little about any party's politics—the man behind it is the important thing.

You may well know that Mrs. Clemens liked the Parlor Car—enjoyed it ever so much, and was indignant at you all through, and kept exploding into rages at you for pretending that such a woman ever existed—closing each and every explosion with "But it is just what such a woman would do."—"It is just what such a woman would say." They all voted the Parlor Car perfection—except me. I said they wouldn't have been allowed to court and quarrel there so long, uninterrupted; but at each critical moment the odious train-boy would come in and pile foul literature all over them four or five inches deep, and the lover would turn his head aside and curse—and presently that train-boy would be back again (as on all those Western roads) to take up the literature and leave prize candy.

Of course the thing is perfect, in the magazine, without

the train-boy; but I was thinking of the stage and the groundlings. If the dainty touches went over their heads, the train-boy and other possible interruptions would fetch them every time. Would it mar the flow of the thing too much to insert that devil? I thought it over a couple of hours and concluded it wouldn't, and that he ought to be in for the sake of the groundlings (and to get new copy-right on the piece.)

And it seemed to me that now that the fourth act is so successfully written, why not go ahead and write the 3 preceding acts? And then after it is finished, let me put into it a low-comedy character (the girl's or the lover's father or uncle) and gobble a big pecuniary interest in your work for myself. Do not let this generous proposition disturb your rest—but *do* write the other 3 acts, and then it will be valuable to managers. And don't go and sell it to anybody, like Harte, but keep it for yourself.

Harte's play can be doctored till it will be entirely acceptable and then it will clear a great sum every year I am out of all patience with Harte for selling it. The play entertained me hugely, even in its present crude state.

Love to you all.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Following the Sellers success, Clemens had made many attempts at dramatic writing. Such undertakings had uniformly failed, but he had always been willing to try again. In the next letter we get the beginning of what proved his first and last direct literary association, that is to say, collaboration, with Bret Harte. Clemens had great admiration for Harte's ability and believed that between them they could turn out a successful play.

Howells's biography of Hayes, meanwhile, had not gone well. He reported that only two thousand copies had been sold in what was now the height of the campaign. "There's success for you," he said; "it makes me despair of the Republic." Clemens, on his part, had made a speech for Hayes that Howells declared had put civil-service reform in a nutshell; he added: "You are the only Republican orator, quoted without distinction of party by all the newspapers."

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Oct. 11, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—This is a secret, to be known to nobody but you (of course I comprehend that Mrs. Howells is part of you) that Bret Harte came up here the other day and asked me to help him write a play and divide the swag, and I agreed. I am to put in Scotty Briggs (See Buck Fanshaw's Funeral, in "Roughing It.") and he is to put in a Chinaman (a wonderfully funny creature, as Bret presents him—for 5 minutes—in his Sandy Bar play.) This Chinaman is to be *the* character of the play, and both of us will work on him and develop him. Bret is to draw a plot, and I am to do the same; we shall use the best of the two, or gouge from both and build a third. My plot is built—finished it yesterday—six days' work, 8 or 9 hours a day, and has nearly killed me.

Now the favor I ask of you is that you will have the words "Ah Sin, a Drama," printed in the middle of a note-paper page and send the same to me, with Bill. We don't want anybody to know that we are building this play. I can't get this title page printed here without having to lie so much that the thought of it is disagreeable to one reared as I have been. And yet the *title* of the play must be *printed*—the rest of the application for copyright is allowable in penmanship.

We have got the very best gang of servants in America, now. When George first came he was one of the most religious of men. He had but one fault—young George Washington's. But I have trained him; and now it fairly breaks Mrs. Clemens's heart to hear George stand at that front door and lie to the unwelcome visitor. But your time is valuable; I must not dwell upon these things. . . .

I'll ask Warner and Harte if they'll do Blindfold Novellettes. Some time I'll simplify that plot. All it needs is

that the hanging and the marriage shall not be appointed for the same day. I got over that difficulty, but it required too much MS to reconcile the thing—so the movement of the story was clogged.

I came near agreeing to make political speeches with our candidate for Governor the 16th and 23 inst., but I had to give up the idea, for Harte and I will be here at work then.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Mark Twain must have been too busy to write letters that winter. Those that have survived are few and unimportant. As a matter of fact, he was writing the play, "Ah Sin," with Bret Harte, and getting it ready for production. Harte was a guest in the Clemens home while the play was being written, and not always a pleasant one. He was full of requirements, critical as to the *ménage*, to the point of sarcasm. The long friendship between Clemens and Harte weakened under the strain of collaboration and intimate daily intercourse, never to renew its old fibre. It was an unhappy outcome of an enterprise which in itself was to prove of little profit. The play, "Ah Sin," had many good features, and with Charles T Parsloe in an amusing Chinese part might have been made a success, if the two authors could have harmoniously undertaken the needed repairs. It drew some good houses in Washington, but could not hold them for a run.

Meantime, Rutherford B. Hayes had been elected President, and Clemens one day called with a letter of introduction from Howells, thinking to meet the Chief Executive. His own letter to Howells, later, probably does not give the real reason of his failure, but it will be amusing to those who recall the erratic personality of George Francis Train. Train and Twain were sometimes confused by the very unlettered; or, pretendedly, by Mark Twain's friends.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Baltimore, May 1 '77.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Found I was not absolutely needed in Washington so I only staid 24 hours, and am on my way home, now. I called at the White House, and

got admission to Col. Rodgers, because I wanted to inquire what was the right hour to go and infest the President. It was my luck to strike the place in the dead waste and middle of the day, the very busiest time. I perceived that Mr. Rodgers took me for George Francis Train and had made up his mind not to let me get at the President; so at the end of half an hour I took my letter of introduction from the table and went away. It was a great pity all round, and a great loss to the nation, for I was brim full of the Eastern question. I didn't get to see the President or the Chief Magistrate either, though I had sort of a glimpse of a lady at a window who resembled her portraits.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Later, in May, Clemens took Twichell for an excursion to Bermuda. He had begged Howells to go with them, but Howells, as usual, was full of literary affairs. Twichell and Clemens spent four glorious days tramping the length and breadth of the beautiful island, and remembered it always as one of their happiest adventures. Clemens would naturally write something about Bermuda, and began at once, "Random Notes of an Idle Excursion," and presently completed four papers, which Howells eagerly accepted for the *Atlantic*. Then we find him plunging into another play, this time alone.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, July 4, 1877.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It is *splendid* of you to say those pleasant things. But I am still plagued with doubts about Parts 1 and 2. If *you* have any, don't print. If otherwise, please make some cold villain like Lathrop read and pass sentence on them. Mind, I thought they were good, at first—it was the *second* reading that accomplished its hellish purpose on *me*. Put them up for a new verdict. Part 4 has lain in my pigeon-hole a good while, and when I put it there I had a Christian's confidence in



4 aces in it; and you can be sure it will skip toward Connecticut tomorrow before any fatal fresh reading makes me draw my bet.

I've piled up 151 MS pages on my comedy. The first, second and fourth acts are done, and done to my satisfaction, too. Tomorrow and next day will finish the 3rd act and the play. I have not written less than 30 pages any day since I began. Never had so much fun over anything in my life—never such consuming interest and delight. (But Lord bless you the second reading will fetch it!) And just think!—I had Sol Smith Russell in my mind's eye for the old detective's part, and hang it he has gone off pottering with Olver Optic, or else the papers lie.

I read everything about the President's doings there with exultation.

I wish that old ass of a private secretary hadn't taken me for George Francis Train. If ignorance were a means of grace I wouldn't trade that gorilla's chances for the Archbishop of Canterbury's.

I shall call on the President again, by and by. I shall go in my war paint; and if I am obstructed the nation will have the unusual spectacle of a private secretary with a pen over one ear, a tomahawk over the other.

I read the entire Atlantic this time. Wonderful number. Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke's story was a ten-strike. I wish she would write 12 old-time New England tales a year.

Good times to you all! Mind if you don't run here for a few days you will go to — hence without having had a fore-glimpse of heaven.

MARK.

The play, “Ah Sin,” that had done little enough in Washington, was that summer given another trial by Augustin Daly, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, with a fine company. Clemens had undertaken to doctor the play, and it would seem to have had an enthusiastic reception on the opening night.

But it was a summer audience, unspoiled by many attractions. "Ah Sin" was never a success in the New York season—never a money-maker on the road.

The reference in the first paragraph of the letter that follows is to the Bermuda chapters which Mark Twain was publishing simultaneously in England and America.

Elmira, Aug. 3, 1877.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have mailed one set of the slips to London, and told Bentley you would print Sept. 15, in October Atlantic, and he must not print earlier in Temple Bar. Have I got the dates and things right?

I am powerful glad to see that No. 1 reads a nation sight better in print than it did in MS. I told Bentley we'd send him the slips, each time, 6 weeks before day of publication. We can do that can't we? Two months ahead would be still better I suppose, but *I* don't know.

"Ah Sin" went a-booming at the Fifth Avenue. The reception of Col. Sellers was calm compared to it.

\* The criticisms were just; the criticisms of the great New York dailies are always just, intelligent, and square and honest—notwithstanding, by a blunder which nobody was seriously to blame for, I was made to say exactly the opposite of this in a newspaper some time ago. Never said it at all, and moreover I never thought it. I could not publicly correct it before the play appeared in New York, because that would look as if I had really said that thing and then was moved by fears for my pocket and my reputation to take it back. But I can correct it now, and shall do it; for now my motives cannot be impugned. When I began this letter, it had not occurred to me to use you in this connection, but it occurs to me now. Your opinion and mine, uttered a year ago, and repeated more than once since, that the candor and ability of the New York critics were beyond question, is a matter which makes it proper enough that I should speak through you at this time. Therefore if you will print this paragraph

somewhere, it may remove the impression that I say unjust things which I do not think, merely for the pleasure of talking.

There, now, Can't you say——

"In a letter to Mr. Howells of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Mark Twain describes the reception of the new comedy 'Ah Sin,' and then goes on to say:" etc.

Beginning at the star with the words, "The criticisms were just. Mrs. Clemens says, "Don't ask that of Mr. Howells—it will be disagreeable to him." I hadn't thought of it, but I will bet two to one on the correctness of her instinct. We shall see.

Will you cut that paragraph out of this letter and precede it with the remarks suggested (or with better ones,) and send it to the *Globe* or some other paper? You can't do me a bigger favor; and yet *if it is in the least disagreeable, you mustn't think of it*. But let me know, right away, for I want to correct this thing before it grows stale again. I explained myself to only one critic (the *World*)—the consequence was a noble notice of the play. This one called on me, else I shouldn't have explained myself to *him*.

I have been putting in a deal of hard work on that play in New York, but it is full of incurable defects.

My old Plunkett family seemed wonderfully coarse and vulgar on the stage, but it was because they were played in such an outrageously and inexcusably coarse way. The Chinaman is killingly funny. I don't know when I have enjoyed anything as much as I did him. The people say there isn't enough of him in the piece. That's a triumph—there'll never be any *more* of him in it.

John Brougham said, "Read the list of things which the critics have condemned in the piece, and you have unassailable proofs that the play contains all the requirements of success and a long life."

That is true. Nearly every time the audience roared I knew it was over something that would be condemned

in the morning (justly, too) but must be left in—for low comedies are written for the drawing-room, the kitchen and the stable, and if you cut out the kitchen and the stable the drawing-room can't support the play by itself.

There was as much money in the house the first two nights as in the first ten of Sellers. Haven't heard from the third—I came away.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The Clemens family was still at Quarry Farm at the end of August, and one afternoon there occurred a startling incident which Mark Twain thought worth setting down in practically duplicate letters to Howells and to Dr. John Brown. It may be of interest to the reader to know that John T. Lewis, the coloured man mentioned, lived to a good old age—a pensioner of the Clemens family and, in the course of time, of H. H. Rogers. Howells's letter follows.

*To W. D. Howells and wife, in Boston :*

Elmira, Aug 25 '77.

MY DEAR HOWELLSSES,—I thought I ought to make a sort of record of it for further reference ; the pleasantest way to do that would be to write it to somebody ; *but* that somebody would let it leak into print and that we wish to avoid. The Howellses would be safe—so let us tell the Howellses about it.

Day before yesterday was a fine summer day away up here on the summit. Aunt Marsh and Cousin May Marsh were here visiting Susie Crane and Livy at our farmhouse. By and by mother Langdon came up the hill in the " high carriage " with Nora the nurse and little Jervis (Charley Langdon's little boy)—Timothy the coachman driving. Behind these came Charley's wife and little girl in the buggy, with the new, young, spry, gray horse—a high stepper. Theodore Crane arrived a little later.

The Bay and Susy were on hand with their nurse,

Rosa. I was on hand, too. Susy Crane's trio of colored servants ditto—these being Josie, house-maid; Aunty Cord, cook, aged 62, turbaned, very tall, very broad, very fine every way (see her portrait in "A True Story Just as I Heard It" in my Sketches;) Chocklate (the laundress) (as the Bay calls her—she can't say Charlotte,) still taller, still more majestic of proportions, turbaned, very black, straight as an Indian—age 24. Then there was the farmer's wife (colored) and her little girl, Susy.

Wasn't it a good audience to get up an excitement before? Good excitable, inflammable material?

Lewis was still down town, three miles away, with his two-horse wagon, to get a load of manure. Lewis is the farmer (colored). He is of mighty frame and muscle, stocky, stooping, ungainly, has a good manly face and a clear eye. Age about 45—and the most picturesque of men, when he sits in his fluttering work-day rags, humped forward into a bunch, with his aged slouch hat mashed down over his ears and neck. It is a spectacle to make the broken-hearted smile. Lewis has worked mighty hard and remained mighty poor. At the end of each whole year's toil he can't show a gain of fifty dollars. He had borrowed money of the Cranes till he owed them \$700—and he being conscientious and honest, imagine what it was to him to have to carry this stubborn, helpless load year in and year out.

Well, sunset came, and Ida the young and comely (Charley Langdon's wife) and her little Julia and the nurse Nora, drove out at the gate behind the new gray horse and started down the long hill—the high carriage receiving its load under the porte cochère. Ida was seen to turn her face toward us across the fence and intervening lawn—Theodore waved good-bye to her, for he did not know that her sign was a speechless appeal for help.

The next moment Livy said, "Ida's driving too fast down hill!" She followed it with a sort of scream, "Her horse is running away!"

We could see two hundred yards down that descent. The buggy seemed to fly. It would strike obstructions and apparently spring the height of a man from the ground.

Theodore and I left the shrieking crowd behind and ran down the hill bare-headed and shouting. A neighbor appeared at his gate—a tenth of a second too late!—the buggy vanished past him like a thought. My last glimpse showed it for one instant, far down the descent, springing high in the air out of a cloud of dust, and then it disappeared. As I flew down the road my impulse was to shut my eyes as I turned them to the right or left, and so delay for a moment the ghastly spectacle of mutilation and death I was expecting.

I ran on and on, still spared this spectacle, but saying to myself: "I shall see it at the turn of the road; they never can pass that turn alive." When I came in sight of that turn I saw two wagons there bunched together—one of them full of people. I said, "Just so—they are staring petrified at the remains."

But when I got amongst that bunch, there sat Ida in her buggy and nobody hurt, not even the horse or the vehicle. Ida was pale but serene. As I came tearing down, she smiled back over her shoulder at me and said, "Well, we're *alive* yet, *aren't* we?" A miracle had been performed—nothing else.

You see Lewis, the prodigious, humped upon his front seat, had been toiling up, on his load of manure; he saw the frantic horse plunging down the hill toward him, on a full gallop, throwing his heels as high as a man's head at every jump. So Lewis turned his team diagonally across the road just at the "turn" thus making a V with the fence—the running horse could not escape that, but must enter it. Then Lewis sprang to the ground and stood in this V. He gathered his vast strength, and with a perfect Creedmoor aim he seized the gray horse's bit as he plunged by and fetched him up standing!

It was down hill, mind you. Ten feet *further* down hill neither Lewis nor any other man could have saved them, for they would have been on the abrupt "turn," then. But how this miracle was ever accomplished at all, by human strength, generalship and accuracy, is clean beyond my comprehension—and grows more so the more I go and examine the ground and try to believe it was actually done. I know one thing, well; if Lewis had missed his aim he would have been killed on the spot in the trap he had made for himself, and we should have found the rest of the remains away down at the bottom of the steep ravine.

Ten minutes later Theodore and I arrived opposite the house, with the servants straggling after us, and shouted to the distracted group on the porch, "Everybody safe!"

Believe it? Why how *could* they? They knew the road perfectly. We might as well have said it to people who had seen their friends go over Niagara.

However, we convinced them; and then, instead of saying something, or going on crying, they grew very still—words could not express it, I suppose.

Nobody could do anything that night, or sleep, either; but there was a deal of moving talk, with long pauses between—pictures of that flying carriage, these pauses represented—this picture intruded itself all the time and disjointed the talk.

But yesterday evening late, when Lewis arrived from down town he found his supper spread, and some presents of books there, with very complimentary writings on the fly-leaves, and certain very complimentary letters, and more or less greenbacks of dignified denomination pinned to these letters and fly-leaves,—and one said, among other things, (signed by the Cranes) "We cancel \$400 of your indebtedness to us," &c. &c.

(The end thereof is not yet, of course, for Charley Langdon is West and will arrive ignorant of all these things, today.)

The supper-room had been kept locked and imposingly secret and mysterious until Lewis should arrive; but around that part of the house were gathered Lewis's wife and child, Chocklate, Josie, Aunty Cord and our Rosa, canvassing things and waiting impatiently. They were all on hand when the curtain rose.

Now, Aunty Cord is a violent Methodist and Lewis an implacable Dunker-Baptist. Those two are inveterate religious disputants. The revealments having been made Aunty Cord said with effusion—

"Now, let folks go on saying there ain't no God! Lewis, the Lord sent you there to stop that horse."

Says Lewis—

"Then who sent the *horse* there in sich a shape?"

But I want to call your attention to one thing. When Lewis arrived the other evening, after saving those lives by a feat which I think is the most marvelous of any I can call to mind—when he arrived, hunched up on his manure wagon and as grotesquely picturesque as usual, everybody wanted to go and see how he looked. They came back and said he was beautiful. It was *so*, too—and yet he would have *photographed* exactly as he would have done any day these past 7 years that he has occupied this farm.

Aug. 27.

P. S. Our little romance in real life is happily and satisfactorily completed. Charley has come, listened, acted—and now John T. Lewis has ceased to consider himself as belonging to that class called "the poor."

It has been known, during some years, that it was Lewis's purpose to buy a thirty dollar silver watch some day, if he ever got where he could afford it. Today Ida has given him a new, sumptuous gold Swiss stem-winding stop-watch; and if any scoffer shall say, "Behold this is out of character," there is an inscription within,



which will silence him; for it will teach him that this wearer aggrandizes the watch, not the watch the wearer.

I was asked beforehand, if this would be a wise gift, and I said "Yes, the very wisest of all; I know the colored race, and I know that in Lewis's eyes this fine toy will throw the other more valuable testimonials far away into the shade. If he lived in England the Humane Society would give him a gold medal as costly as this watch, and nobody would say: "It is out of character." If Lewis chose to wear a town clock, who would become it better?"

Lewis has sound common sense, and is not going to be spoiled. The instant he found himself possessed of money, he forgot himself in a plan to make his old father comfortable, who is wretchedly poor and lives down in Maryland. His next act, on the spot, was the proffer to the Cranes of the \$300 of his remaining indebtedness to them. This was put off by them to the indefinite future, for he is not going to be allowed to pay that at all, though he doesn't know it.

A letter of acknowledgment from Lewis contains a sentence which raises it to the dignity of literature:

"But I beg to say, humbly, that inasmuch as divine providence saw fit to use me as a instrument for the saving of those presshious lives, the honnor conferd upon me was greater than the feat performed."

That is well said.

Yrs ever

MARK.

Howells was moved to use the story in the "Contributors' Club," and warned Clemens against letting it get into the newspapers. He declared he thought it one of the most impressive things he had ever read. But Clemens seems never to have allowed it to be used in any form. In its entirety, therefore, it is quite new matter.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston:*

Hartford, Sept. 19, 1877.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I don't really see how the story of the runaway horse could read well with the little

details of names and places and things left out. *They* are the true life of all narrative. It wouldn't quite do to print them at this time. We'll talk about it when you come. Delicacy—a sad, sad false delicacy—robs literature of the best two things among its belongings. Family-circle narrative and obscene stories. But no matter; in that better world which I trust we are all going to I have the hope and belief that they will not be denied us.

Say—Twichell and I had an adventure at sea, 4½ months ago, which I did not put in my Bermuda articles, because there was not enough to it. But the press dispatches bring the sequel today, and now there's plenty to it. A sailless, wasteless, chartless, compassless, grubless old condemned tub that has been drifting helpless about the ocean for 4 months and a half, begging bread and water like any other tramp, flying a signal of distress, permanently, and with 13 innocent, marveling chuckle-headed Bermuda niggers on board, taking a Pleasure Excursion! Our ship fed the poor devils on the 25th of last May, far out at sea and left them to bullrag their way to New York—and now they ain't as near New York as they were then by 250 miles! They have drifted 750 miles and are still drifting in the relentless Gulf Stream! What a delicious magazine chapter it would make—but I had to deny myself. I had to come right out in the papers at once, with my details, so as to try to raise the government's sympathy sufficiently to have better succor sent them than the cutter Colfax, which went a little way in search of them the other day and then struck a fog and gave it up

If the President were in Washington I would telegraph him.

When I hear that the "Jonas Smith" has been found again, I mean to send for one of those darkies, to come to Hartford, and give me his adventures for an Atlantic article.

Likely you will see my today's article in the newspapers.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The revenue cutter Colfax, went after the Jonas Smith, thinking there was mutiny or other crime on board. It occurs to me now that, since there is only mere suffering and misery and nobody to punish, it ceases to be a matter which (a republican form of) government will feel authorized to interfere in further. Dam a republican form of government.

*To Mrs. Jane Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa :*

Hartford, Feb. 17, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I suppose I am the worst correspondent in the whole world ; and yet I grow worse and worse all the time. My conscience blisters me for not writing you, but it has ceased to abuse me for not writing other folks.

Life has come to be a very serious matter with me. I have a badgered, harassed feeling, a good part of my time. It comes mainly of business responsibilities and annoyances, and the persecution of kindly letters from well meaning strangers—to whom I must be rudely silent or else put in the biggest half of my time bothering over answers. There are other things also that help to consume my time and defeat my projects. Well, the consequence is, I cannot write a book at home. This cuts my income down. Therefore, I have about made up my mind to take my tribe and fly to some little corner of Europe and budge no more until I shall have completed one of the half dozen books that lie begun, up stairs. Please say nothing about this at present.

We propose to sail the 11th of April. I shall go to Fredonia to meet you, but it will not be well for Livy

to make that trip I am afraid. However, we shall see. I will hope she can go.

Mr. Twichell has just come in, so I must go to him. We are all well, and send love to you all.

Affly,

SAM.

He was writing few letters at this time, and doing but little work. There were always many social events during the winter, and what with his European plans and a diligent study of the German language, which the entire family undertook, his days and evenings were full enough. Howells wrote protesting against the European travel. Clemens replied promptly, urging a visit to Hartford, adding a postscript for Mrs. Howells, characteristic enough to warrant preservation.

*P. S. to Mrs. Howells, in Boston :*

Feb. '78.

DEAR MRS. HOWELLS,—Mrs. Clemens wrote you a letter, and handed it to me half an hour ago, while I was folding mine to Mr. Howells. I laid that letter on this table before me while I added the paragraph about R——'s application. Since then I have been hunting and swearing, and swearing and hunting, but I can't find a sign of that letter. It is the most astonishing disappearance I ever heard of. Mrs. Clemens has gone off driving—so I will have to try and give you an idea of her communication from memory. Mainly it consisted of an urgent desire that you come to see us next week, if you can possibly manage it, for that will be a reposeful time, the turmoil of breaking up beginning the week after. She wants you to tell her about Italy, and advise her in that connection, if you will. Then she spoke of her plans—hers, mind you, for I never have anything quite so definite as a plan. She proposes to stop a fortnight in (confound the place, I've forgotten what it was,) then go and *live* in Dresden till sometime in the summer; then retire to Switzerland for the hottest season, then stay

a while in Venice and put in the winter in Munich—This program subject to modifications according to circumstances. She said something about some little by-trips here and there, but they didn't stick in my memory because the idea didn't charm me.

(They have just telephoned me from the Courant office that Bayard Taylor and family have taken rooms in our ship, the *Holsatia*, for the 11th April.)

*Do* come, if you possibly can!—and remember and don't forget to avoid letting Mrs. Clemens find out I lost her letter. Just answer her the same as if you had got it.

Sincerely yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

The first European letter came from Frankfort, a rest on their way to Heidelberg.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Frankfort on the Main, May 4, 1878.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I only propose to write a single line to say we are still around. Ah, I have such a deep, grateful, unutterable sense of being “out of it all.” I think I foretaste some of the advantages of being dead. Some of the joy of it. I don't read any newspapers or care for them. When people tell me England has declared war, I drop the subject, feeling that it is none of my business; when they tell me Mrs. Tilton has confessed and Mr. B. denied, I say both of them have done that before, therefore let the worn stub of the Plymouth white-wash brush be brought out once more, and let the faithful spit on their hands and get to work again regardless of me—for I am out of it all.

We had 2 almost devilish weeks at sea (and I tell you Bayard Taylor is a really lovable man—which you already knew) then we staid a week in the beautiful, the *very* beautiful city of Hamburg; and since then we have been fooling along, 4 hours per day by rail, with a courier,

spending the other 20 in hotels whose enormous bed-chambers and private parlors are an overpowering marvel to me. Day before yesterday, in Cassel, we had a love of a bedroom 31 feet long, and a parlor with 2 sofas, 12 chairs, a writing desk and 4 tables scattered around, here and there in it. Made of red silk, too, by George.

The times and times I wish you were along! *You* could throw some fun into the journey; whereas I go on, day by day, in a smileless state of solemn admiration.

What a paradise this is! What clean clothes, what good faces, what tranquil contentment, what prosperity, what genuine freedom, what superb government. And I am so happy, for I am responsible for none of it. I am only here to enjoy. How charmed I am when I overhear a German word which I understand. With love from us 2 to you 2.

MARK.

P.S. . . . Poor Susy! From the day we reached German soil, we have required Rosa to speak German to the children—which they hate with all their souls. The other morning in Hanover, Susy came to us (from Rosa, in the nursery) and said, in halting syllables, “Papa, wie viel uhr ist es?”—then turned with pathos in her big eyes, and said, “Mamma, I wish Rosa was made in English.” . . .

*Part of letter to W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Schloss-Hotel Heidelberg, Sunday, a.m., May 26, 1878.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— . . . divinely located. From this airy porch among the shining groves we look down upon Heidelberg Castle, and upon the swift Neckar, and the town, and out over the wide green level of the Rhine valley—a marvelous prospect. We are in a cul-de-sac formed of hill-ranges and river; we are on the side of a steep mountain; the river at our feet is walled, on its other side, (yes, on both sides,) by a steep and wooded

mountain-range which rises abruptly aloft from the water's edge; portions of these mountains are densely wooded; the plain of the Rhine, seen through the mouth of this pocket, has many and peculiar charms for the eye.

Our bedroom has two great glass bird-cages (enclosed balconies) one looking toward the Rhine valley and sunset, the other looking up the Neckar cul-de-sac, and naturally we spend nearly all our time in these—when one is sunny the other is shady. We have tables and chairs in them; we do our reading, writing, studying, smoking and suppering in them.

The view from these bird-cages is my despair. The pictures change from one enchanting aspect to another in ceaseless procession, never keeping one form half an hour, and never taking on an unlovely one.

And then Heidelberg on a dark night! It is massed, away down there, almost right under us, you know, and stretches off toward the valley. Its curved and interlacing streets are a cobweb, beaded thick with lights—a wonderful thing to see; then the rows of lights on the arched bridges, and their glinting reflections in the water; and away at the far end, the Eisenbahnhof, with its twenty solid acres of glittering gas-jets, a huge garden, as one may say, whose every plant is a flame.

These balconies are the darlindest things. I have spent all the morning in this north one. Counting big and little, it has 256 panes of glass in it; so one is in effect right out in the free sunshine, and yet sheltered from wind and rain—and likewise doored and curtained from whatever may be going on in the bedroom. It must have been a noble genius who devised this hotel. Lord, how blessed is the repose, the tranquillity of this place! Only two sounds; the happy clamor of the birds in the groves, and the muffled music of the Neckar, tumbling over the opposing dykes. It is no hardship to lie awake awhile, nights, for this subdued roar has exactly the sound of a steady rain beating upon a roof. It is so healing to the

spirit; and it bears up the thread of one's imaginings as the accompaniment bears up a song.

While Livy and Miss Spaulding have been writing at this table, I have sat tilted back, near by, with a pipe and the last Atlantic, and read Charley Warner's article with prodigious enjoyment. I think it is exquisite. I think it must be the roundest and broadest and completest short essay he has ever written. It is clear, and compact, and charmingly done.

The hotel grounds join and communicate with the Castle grounds; so we and the children loaf in the winding paths of those leafy vastnesses a great deal, and drink beer and listen to excellent music.

When we first came to this hotel, a couple of weeks ago, I pointed to a house across the river, and said I meant to rent the centre room on the 3d floor for a work-room. Jokingly we got to speaking of it as my office; and amused ourselves with watching "my people" daily in their small grounds and trying to make out what we could of their dress, &c., without a glass. Well, I loafed along there one day and found on that house the only sign of the kind on that side of the river: "Moblirte Wohnung zu Vermiethen!" I went in and rented that very room which I had long ago selected. There was only one other room in the whole double-house unrented.

(It occurs to me that I made a great mistake in not thinking to deliver a very bad German speech, every other sentence pieced out with English, at the Bayard Taylor banquet in New York. I think I could have made it one of the features of the occasion.)<sup>1</sup>

We left Hartford before the end of March, and I have been idle ever since. I have waited for a call to go to work—I knew it would come. Well, it began to come a week ago; my note-book comes out more and more frequently every day since; 3 days ago I concluded to move

<sup>1</sup> He used this plan at a gathering of the American students in Heidelberg, on July 4th, with great effect; so his idea was not wasted.



my manuscript over to my den. *Now* the call is loud and decided at last. So tomorrow I shall begin regular, steady work, and stick to it till middle of July or 1st August, when I look for Twichell; we will then walk about Germany 2 or 3 weeks, and then I'll go to work again—(perhaps in Munich.)

We both send a power of love to the Howellses, and we do wish you were here. Are you in the new house? Tell us about it.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

August 1st brought Twichell, and the friends set out without delay on a tramp through the Black Forest, making short excursions at first, but presently extending them in the direction of Switzerland. Mrs. Clemens and the others remained in Heidelberg, to follow at their leisure. To Mrs. Clemens her husband sent frequent reports of their wanderings.

Over the Gemmi Pass.

4 30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 24, 1878.

Livy darling, Joe and I have had a most noble day. Started to climb (on foot) at 8.30 this morning among the grandest peaks! Every half hour carried us back a month in the season. We left them harvesting 2d crop of hay. At 9 we were in July and found ripe strawberries; at 9.30 we were in June and gathered flowers belonging to that month; at 10 we were in May and gathered a flower which appeared in Heidelberg the 17th of that month; also forget-me-nots, which disappeared from Heidelberg about mid-May; at 11.30 we were in April (by the flowers;) at noon we had rain and hail mixed, and wind and enveloping fogs, and considered it March; at 12.30 we had snowbanks above us and snowbanks below us, and considered it February. Not *good* February, though, because in the midst of the wild desolation the forget-me-not still bloomed, lovely as ever.

What a flower garden the Gemmi Pass is! After I had got my hands full Joe made me a paper bag, which I pinned

to my lapel and filled with choice specimens. I gathered no flowers which I had ever gathered before except 4 or 5 kinds. We took it leisurely and I picked all I wanted to. I mailed my harvest to you a while ago. Don't send it to Mrs. Brooks until you have looked it over, flower by flower. It will pay.

Among the clouds and everlasting snows I found a brave and bright little forget-me-not growing in the very midst of a smashed and tumbled stone-debris, just as cheerful as if the barren and awful domes and ramparts that towered around were the blessed walls of heaven. I thought how Lilly Warner would be touched by such a gracious surprise, if she, instead of I, had seen it. So I plucked it, and have mailed it to her with a note.

Our walk was 7 hours—the last 2 down a path as steep as a ladder, almost, cut in the face of a mighty precipice. People are not allowed to ride down it. This part of the day's work taxed our knees, I tell you. We have been loafing about this village (Leukerbad) for an hour, now—we stay here over Sunday. Not tired at all. (Joe's hat fell over the precipice—so he came here bareheaded.) I love you, my darling.

SAML.

Twichell also made his reports home, some of which give us interesting pictures of his walking partner. In one place he wrote: "Mark is a queer fellow. There is nothing he so delights in as a swift, strong stream. You can hardly get him to leave one when once he is within the influence of its fascinations."

Twichell tells how at Kandersteg they were out together one evening where a brook comes plunging down from Gasterthal and how he pushed in a drift to see it go racing along the current. "When I got back to the path Mark was running down stream after it as hard as he could go, throwing up his hands and shouting in the wildest ecstasy, and when a piece went over a fall and emerged to view in the foam below he would jump up and down and yell. He said afterward that he had not been so excited in three months."

In other places Twichell refers to his companion's consideration for the feeling of others, and for animals. "When we are

driving, his concern is all about the horse. He can't bear to see the whip used, or to see a horse pull hard."

The tramp really ended at Lausanne, where Clemens joined his party.

From Switzerland the Clemens party worked down into Italy, sight-seeing, a diversion in which Mark Twain found little enough of interest.

From Italy the Clemens party went to Munich, where they had arranged in advance for winter quarters. Clemens claims, in his report of the matter to Howells, that he took the party through without the aid of a courier, though thirty years later, in some comment which he set down on being shown the letter, he wrote concerning this paragraph: "Probably a lie."

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

No 1 a, Karlstrasse, 2 e Stock.  
Care Fraulein Dahlweiner.

Munich, Nov. 17, 1878.

. . . While it occurs to me, I must tell you Susie's last. She is sorely badgered with dreams; and her stock dream is that she is being eaten up by bears. She is a grave and thoughtful child, as you will remember. Last night she had the usual dream. This morning she stood apart (after telling it,) for some time, looking vacantly at the floor, and absorbed in meditation. At last she looked up, and with the pathos of one who feels he has not been dealt by with even-handed fairness, said "But Mamma, the trouble is, that I am never the *bear*, but always the person."

It would not have occurred to me that there might be an advantage, even in a dream, in occasionally being the eater, instead of always the party eaten, but I easily perceived that her point was well taken.

I'm sending to Heidelberg for your letter and Winnie's, and I do hope they haven't been lost.

My wife and I send love to you all.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The "detective" chapter mentioned below was not included in *A Tramp Abroad*. It was published separately, as *The Stolen White Elephant* in a volume bearing that title. The play, which he had now found "dreadfully witless and flat," was no other than "Simon Wheeler, Detective," which he had once regarded so highly. The "Stewart" referred to was the millionaire merchant, A. T. Stewart, whose body was stolen in the expectation of reward.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Munich, Jan. 21, (1879)

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It's no use,—your letter miscarried in some way and is lost. The consul has made a thorough search and says he has not been able to trace it. It is unaccountable, for all the letters I did *not* want arrived without a single grateful failure. Well, I have read-up, now, as far as you have got,—that is, to where there's a storm at sea approaching,—and we three think you are clear out-Howellsing Howells. If your literature has not struck perfection now we are not able to see what is lacking. It is all such truth—truth to the life; everywhere your pen falls it leaves a photograph. I did imagine that everything had been said about life at sea that could be said,—but no matter, it was all a failure and lies, nothing but lies with a thin varnish of fact,—only *you* have stated it as it absolutely *is*. And only you see people and their ways, and their insides and outsides as they *are*, and make them talk as they *do* talk. I think you are the very greatest artist in these tremendous mysteries that ever lived. There doesn't seem to be anything that can be concealed from your awful all-seeing eye. It must be a cheerful thing for one to live with you and be aware that you are going up and down in him like another conscience all the time. Possibly you will not be a fully accepted classic until you have been dead a hundred years,—it is the fate of the Shakespeares and of all genuine prophets,—but then your books will be as common as

Bibles, *I* believe. You're not a weed, but an oak; not a summer-house, but a cathedral. In that day *I* shall still be in the Cyclopedias, too,—thus: "Mark Twain; history and occupation unknown—but he was personally acquainted with Howells." There—I could sing your praises all day, and feel and believe every bit of it.

My book is half finished; I wish to heaven it was done. I have given up writing a detective novel—can't write a novel, for I lack the faculty; but when the detectives were nosing around after Stewart's loud remains, I threw a chapter into my present book in which I have very extravagantly burlesqued the detective business—if it is possible to burlesque that business extravagantly. You know I was going to send you that detective play, so that you could re-write it. Well I didn't do it because I couldn't find a single idea in it that could be useful to you. It was dreadfully witless and flat. I knew it would sadden you and unfit you for work.

I have always been sorry we threw up that play embodying Orion which you began. It was a mistake to do that. Do keep that MS and tackle it again. It will work out all right; you will see. I don't believe that that character exists in literature in so well-developed a condition as it exists in Orion's person. Now won't you put Orion in a *story*? Then he will go handsomely into a play afterwards. How deliciously you could paint him—it would make fascinating reading—the sort that makes a reader laugh and cry at the same time, for Orion is as good and ridiculous a soul as ever was.

Ah, to think of Bayard Taylor! It is too sad to talk about. I was so glad there was not a single sting and so many good praiseful words in the Atlantic's criticism of Deukalion.

Love to you all

Yrs Ever

MARK.

We remain here till middle of March.

In *A Tramp Abroad* there is an incident in which the author describes himself as hunting for a lost sock in the dark, in a vast hotel bedroom at Heilbronn. The account of the real incident, as written to Twichell, seems even more amusing.

"The Yarn About the Limburger Cheese and the Box of Guns," like "The Stolen White Elephant," did not find place in the travel-book, but was published in the same volume with the elephant story, added to the rambling notes of "An Idle Excursion."

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Munich, Jan. 26 '79.

DEAR OLD JOE,—Sunday. Your delicious letter arrived exactly at the right time. It was laid by my plate as I was finishing breakfast at 12 noon. Livy and Clara (Spaulding) arrived from church 5 minutes later ; I took a pipe and spread myself out on the sofa, and Livy sat by and read, and I warmed to that butcher the moment he began to swear. There is more than one way of praying, and I like the butcher's way because the petitioner is so apt to be in earnest. I was peculiarly alive to his performance just at this time, for another reason, to wit : Last night I awoke at 3 this morning, and after raging to myself for 2 interminable hours, I gave it up. I rose, assumed a catlike stealthiness, to keep from waking Livy, and proceeded to dress in the pitch dark. Slowly but surely I got on garment after garment—all down to one sock ; I had one slipper on and the other in my hand. Well, on my hands and knees I crept softly around, pawing and feeling and scooping along the carpet, and among chair-legs for that missing sock ; I kept that up ;—and still kept it up and *kept* it up. At first I only said to myself "Blame that sock," but that soon ceased to answer ; my expletives grew steadily stronger and stronger,—and at last, when I found I was *lost*, I had to sit flat down on the floor and take hold of something to keep from lifting the roof off with the profane explosion that was trying to get out of me. I could see the dim blur of the window, but

of course it was in the wrong place and could give me no information as to where I was. But I had one comfort—I had not waked Livy; I believed I could find that sock in silence if the night lasted long enough. So I started again and softly pawed all over the place,—and sure enough at the end of half an hour I laid my hand on the missing article. I rose joyfully up and butted the wash-bowl and pitcher off the stand and simply raised——so to speak. Livy screamed, then said, “Who is that? what *is* the matter?” I said “There ain’t anything the matter—I’m hunting for my sock.” She said, “Are you hunting for it with a club?”

I went in the parlor and lit the lamp, and gradually the fury subsided and the ridiculous features of the thing began to suggest themselves. So I lay on the sofa, with note-book and pencil, and transferred the adventure to our big room in the hotel at Heilbronn, and got it on paper a good deal to my satisfaction.

I found the Swiss note-book, some time ago. When it was first lost I was glad of it, for I was getting an idea that I had lost my faculty of writing sketches of travel; therefore the loss of that note-book would render the writing of this one simply impossible, and let me gracefully out; I was about to write to Bliss and propose some other book, when the confounded thing turned up, and down went my heart into my boots. But there was now no excuse, so I went solidly to work—tore up a great part of the MS written in Heidelberg,—wrote and tore up,—continued to write and tear up,—and at last, reward of patient and noble persistence, my pen got the old swing again!

Since then I’m glad Providence knew better what to do with the Swiss note-book than I did, for I like my work, now, exceedingly, and often turn out over 30 MS pages a day and then quit sorry that Heaven makes the days so short.

One of my discouragements had been the belief that

my interest in this tour had been so slender that I couldn't gouge matter enough out of it to make a book. What a mistake. I've got 900 pages written (not a word in it about the sea voyage) yet I stepped my foot out of Heidelberg for the first time yesterday,—and then only to take our party of four on our first pedestrian tour—to Heilbronn. I've got them dressed elaborately in walking costume—knapsacks, canteens, field-glasses, leather leggings, patent walking shoes, muslin folds around their hats, with long tails hanging down behind, sun umbrellas, and *Alpenstocks*. They go all the way to Wimpfen by rail—thence to Heilbronn in a chance vegetable cart drawn by a donkey and a cow; I shall fetch them home on a raft; and if other people shall perceive that that was no pedestrian excursion, they *themselves* shall not be conscious of it.—This trip will take 100 pages or more,—oh, goodness knows how many! for the mood is everything, not the material, and I already seem to see 300 pages rising before me on that trip. Then, I propose to leave Heidelberg for good. Don't you see, the book (1800 MS pages,) may really be finished before I ever get to Switzerland?

But there's one thing; I want to tell Frank Bliss and his father to be charitable toward me in,—that is, let me tear up all the MS I want to, and give me time to write more. I shan't waste the time—I haven't the slightest desire to loaf, but a consuming desire to work, ever since I got back my swing. And you see this book is either going to be compared with the *Innocents Abroad*, or *contrasted* with it, to my disadvantage. I think I can make a book that will be no dead corpse of a thing and I mean to do my level best to accomplish that.

My crude plans are crystalizing. As the thing stands now, I went to Europe for *three* purposes. The first you *know*, and must keep secret, even from the Blisses; the second is to study *Art*; and the third to acquire a critical knowledge of the German language. My MS already shows that the two latter objects are accomplished. It



shows that I am moving about as an Artist and a Philologist, and unaware that there is any immodesty in assuming these titles. Having three definite objects has had the effect of seeming to enlarge my domain and give me the freedom of a loose costume. It is three strings to my bow, too.

Well, your butcher is magnificent. He won't stay out of my mind.—I keep trying to think of some way of getting your account of him into my book without his being offended—and yet confound him there isn't anything you have said which *he* would see any offense in,—I'm only thinking of his friends—*they* are the parties who busy themselves with seeing things for people. But I'm bound to have him in. I'm putting in the yarn about the Limburger cheese and the box of guns, too—mighty glad Howells declined it. It seems to gather richness and flavor with age. I have very nearly killed several companies with that narrative,—the American Artists' Club, here, for instance, and Smith and wife and Miss Griffith (they were here in this house a week or two.) I've got 3 other chapters that pretty nearly destroyed the same parties, too.—

O, Switzerland ! the further it recedes into the enriching haze of time, the more intolerably delicious the charm of it and the cheer of it and the glory and majesty and solemnity and pathos of it grow. Those mountains had a soul ; they thought ; they spoke,—one couldn't hear it with the ears of the body, but what a voice it was !—and how real. Deep down in my memory it is sounding yet. Alp calleth unto Alp !—that stately old Scriptural wording is the right one for God's Alps and God's ocean. How puny we were in that awful presence—and how painless it was to be so ; how fitting and right it seemed, and how stingless was the sense of our unspeakable insignificance. And Lord how pervading were the repose and peace and blessedness that poured out of the heart of the invisible Great Spirit of the Mountains.

Now what *is* it ? There are mountains and mountains and mountains in this world—but only these take you by the heart-strings. I wonder what the secret of it is. Well, time and time again it has seemed to me that I *must* drop everything and flee to Switzerland once more. It is a *longing*—a deep, strong, tugging *longing*—that is the word. We must go again, Joe.—October days, let us get up at dawn and breakfast at the tower. I should like that first rate.

Livy and all of us send deluges of love to you and Harmony and all the children. I dreamed last night that I woke up in the library at home and your children were frolicing around me and Julia was sitting in my lap ; you and Harmony and both families of Warners had finished their welcomes and were filing out through the conservatory door, wrecking Patrick's flower pots with their dress skirts as they went. Peace and plenty abide with you all !

MARK.

I want the Blisses to know their part of this letter, if possible. They will see that my delay was not from choice.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Munich, Feb. 9. (1879)

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have just received this letter from Orion—take care of it, for it is worth preserving. I got as far as 9 pages in my answer to it, when Mrs. Clemens shut down on it, and said it was cruel, and made me send the money and simply wish his lecture success. I said I couldn't lose my 9 pages—so she said send them to you. But I will acknowledge that I thought I was writing a very kind letter.

Now just look at this letter of Orion's. Did you ever

see the grotesquely absurd and the heart-breakingly pathetic more closely joined together? Mrs. Clemens said "Raise his monthly pension." So I wrote to Perkins to raise it a trifle.

Now only think of it! He still has 100 pages to write on his lecture, yet in one inking of his pen he has already swooped around the United States and invested the result!

You *must* put him in a book or a play right away. You are the only man capable of doing it. You might die at any moment, and your very greatest work would be lost to the world. I could write Orion's simple biography, and make it effective, too, by merely stating the bald facts—and this I will do if he dies before I do; but *you* must put him into romance. This was the understanding you and I had the day I sailed.

Observe Orion's career—that is, a *little* of it: (1) He has belonged to as many as five different religious denominations; last March he withdrew from the deaconship in a Congregational Church and the Superintendency of its Sunday School, in a speech in which he said that for many months (it runs in my mind that he said 13 years,) he had been a confirmed *infidel*, and so felt it to be his duty to retire from the flock.

2. After being a republican for years, he wanted me to buy him a democratic newspaper. A few days before the Presidential election, he came out in a speech and publicly went over to the democrats; he prudently "hedged" by voting for 6 state republicans, also.

The new convert was made one of the secretaries of the democratic meeting, and placed in the list of speakers. He wrote me jubilantly of what a ten-strike he was going to make with that speech. All right—but think of his innocent and pathetic candor in writing me something like this, a week later:

"I was more diffident than I had expected to be, and this was increased by the silence with which I was received when I came forward; so I seemed unable to get

the fire into my speech which I had calculated upon, and presently they began to get up and go out; and in a few minutes they all rose up and went away."

How *could* a man uncover such a sore as that and show it to another? Not a word of complaint, you see—only a patient, sad surprise.

3. His next project was to write a burlesque upon *Paradise Lost*.

4. Then, learning that the *Times* was paying Harte \$100 a column for stories, he concluded to write some for the same price. I read his first one and persuaded him not to write any more.

5. Then he read proof on the *N. Y. Eve. Post* at \$10 a week and meekly observed that the foreman swore at him and ordered him around "like a steamboat mate."

6. Being discharged from that post, he wanted to try agriculture—was sure he could make a fortune out of a chicken farm. I gave him \$900 and he went to a ten-house village 2 miles above Keokuk on the river bank—this place was a railway station. He soon asked for money to buy a horse and light wagon,—because the trains did not run at church time on Sunday and his wife found it rather far to walk.

For a long time I answered demands for "loans" and by next mail always received his check for the interest due me to date. In the most guleless way he let it leak out that he did not underestimate the value of his custom to me, since it was not likely that any other customer of mine paid his interest *quarterly*, and this enabled me to use my capital twice in 6 months instead of only once. But alas, when the debt at last reached \$1800 or \$2500 (I have forgotten which) the interest ate too formidably into his borrowings, and so he quietly ceased to pay it or speak of it. At the end of two years I found that the chicken farm had long ago been abandoned, and he had moved into Keokuk. Later in one of his casual moments, he observed that there was no money in fattening a

chicken on 65 cents worth of corn and then selling it for 50.

7. Finally, if I would lend him \$500 a year for two years, (this was 4 or 5 years ago,) he *knew* he could make a success as a lawyer, and would prove it. This is the pension which we have just increased to \$600. The first year his legal business brought him \$5. It also brought him an unremunerative case where some villains were trying to chouse some negro orphans out of \$700. He still has this case. He has waggled it around through various courts and made some booming speeches on it. The negro children have grown up and married off, now, I believe, and their litigated town-lot has been dug up and carted off by somebody—but Orion still infests the courts with his documents and makes the welkin ring with his venerable case. The second year, he didn't make anything. The third he made \$6, and I made Bliss put a case in his hands—about half an hour's work. Orion charged \$50 for it—Bliss paid him \$15. Thus four or five years of lawing has brought him \$26, but this will doubtless be increased when he gets done lecturing and buys that "law library." Meantime his office rent has been \$60 a year, and he has stuck to that lair day by day as patiently as a spider.

8. Then he by and by conceived the idea of lecturing around America as "Mark Twain's Brother"—that to be on the bills. Subject of proposed lecture, "On the Formation of Character."

9. I protested, and he got on his warpaint, couched his lance, and ran a bold tilt against total abstinence and the Red Ribbon fanatics. It raised a fine row among the virtuous Keokukians.

10. I wrote to encourage him in his good work, but I had let a mail intervene; so by the time my letter reached him he was already winning laurels as a Red Ribbon Howler.

11. Afterward he took a rabid part in a prayer-meeting

epidemic ; dropped that to travesty Jules Verne ; dropped that, in the middle of the last chapter, last March, to digest the matter of an infidel book which he proposed to write ; and now he comes to the surface to rescue our " noble and beautiful religion " from the sacrilegious talons of Bob Ingersoll.

Now come ! Don't fool away this treasure which Providence has laid at your feet, but take it up and use it. One can let his imagination run riot in portraying Orion, for there is nothing so extravagant as to be out of character with him.

Well—good-bye, and a short life and a merry one be yours. Poor old Methusaleh, how did he manage to stand it so long ?

Yrs ever,

MARK.

*To Orion Clemens*

*(Unsent and inclosed with the foregoing, to W. D. Howells) :*

Munch, Feb. 9, (1879)

MY DEAR BRO.,—Yours has just arrived. I enclose a draft on Hartford for \$25. You will have abandoned the project you wanted it for, by the time it arrives,—but no matter, apply it to your newer and present project, whatever it is. You see I have an ineradicable faith in your unsteadfastness,—but mind you, *I* didn't invent that faith, you conferred it on me yourself. But fire away, fire away ! I don't see why a changeable man shouldn't get as much enjoyment out of his changes, and transformations and transfigurations as a steadfast man gets out of standing still and pegging at the same old monotonous thing all the time. That is to say, I don't see why a kaleidoscope shouldn't enjoy itself as much as a telescope, nor a grindstone have as good a time as a whetstone, nor a barometer as good a time as a yardstick. I don't feel like girding at you any more about fickleness of purpose, because I recognize and realize at last that it

is incurable ; but before I learned to accept this truth, each new weekly project of yours possessed the power of throwing me into the most exhausting and helpless convulsions of profanity. But fire away, now ! Your magic has lost its might. I am able to view your inspirations dispassionately and judicially, now, and say "This one or that one or the other one is not up to your average flight, or is above it, or below it."

And so, without passion, or prejudice, or bias of any kind, I sit in judgment upon your lecture project, and say it was up to your average, it was indeed above it, for it had possibilities in it, and even *practical* ones. While I was not sorry you abandoned it, I should not be sorry if you had stuck to it and given it a trial. But on the whole you did the wise thing to lay it aside, I think, because a lecture is a most easy thing to fail in ; and at your time of life, and in your own town, such a failure would make a deep and cruel wound in your heart and in your pride. It was decidedly unwise in you to think for a moment of coming before a community who knew you, with such a course of lectures ; because Keokuk is not unaware that you have been a Swedenborgian, a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist, and a Methodist (on probation), and that just a year ago you were an infidel. If Keokuk had gone to your lecture course, it would have gone to be amused, not instructed,—for when a man is known to have no settled convictions of his own he can't convince other people. They would have gone to be amused and that would have been a deep humiliation to you. It could have been safe for you to appear only where you were unknown—then many of your hearers would think you were in earnest. And they would be right. You *are* in earnest while your convictions are new. But taking it by and large, you probably did best to discard that project altogether. But I leave you to judge of that, for you are the worst judge I know of.

(Unfinished.)

In Paris Mark Twain and his family found pleasant quarters at the Hotel Normandy, but it was a chilly, rainy spring, and they gained a rather poor impression of the French capital.

It was September 3, 1879, that Mark Twain returned to America by the steamer *Gallia*. In the seventeen months of his absence he had taken on a "travelled look" and had added grey hairs.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, Sept. 15, 1879.

. . . Say—a friend of mine wants to write a play with me, I to furnish the broad-comedy cuss. I don't know anything about his ability, but his letter serves to remind me of *our* old projects. If you haven't used Orion or Old Wakeman, don't you think you and I can get together and grind out a play with one of those fellows in it? Orion is a field which grows richer and richer the more he mulches it with each new topdressing of religion or other guano. Drop me an immediate line about this, won't you? I imagine I see Orion on the stage, always gentle, always melancholy, always changing his politics and religion, and trying to reform the world, always inventing something, and losing a limb by a new kind of explosion at the end of each of the four acts. Poor old chap, he is good material. I can imagine his wife or his sweetheart reluctantly adopting each of his new religions in turn, just in time to see him waltz into the next one and leave her isolated once more.

(*Mem.* Orion's wife *has* followed him into the outer darkness, after 30 years' rabid membership in the Presbyterian Church.)

Well, with the sincerest and most abounding love to you and yours, from all this family, I am,

Yrs ever

MARK.

The idea of the play interested Howells, but he had twinges of conscience in the matter of using Orion as material. As a



matter of fact, Orion Clemens had a keen appreciation of his own shortcomings, and would have enjoyed himself in a play as much as any observer of it. Indeed, it is more than likely that he would have been pleased at the thought of such distinguished dramatization.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, Oct. 9 '79.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Since my return, the mail facilities have enabled Orion to keep me informed as to his intentions. Twenty-eight days ago it was his purpose to complete a work aimed at religion, the preface to which he had already written. Afterward he began to sell off his furniture, with the idea of hurrying to Leadville and tackling silver-mining—threw up his law den and took in his sign. Then he wrote to Chicago and St. Louis newspapers asking for a situation as “paragrapher”—enclosing a taste of his quality in the shape of two stanzas of “humorous rhymes.” By a later mail on the same day he applied to New York and Hartford insurance companies for copying to do.

However, it would take too long to detail all his projects. They comprise a removal to south-west Missouri ; application for a reporter's berth on a Keokuk paper ; application for a compositor's berth on a St. Louis paper ; a re-hanging of his attorney's sign, “though it only creaks and catches no flies ;” but last night's letter informs me that he has re-tackled the religious question, hired a distant den to write in, applied to my mother for \$50 to re-buy his furniture, which has advanced in value since the sale—purposes buying \$25 worth of books necessary to his labors which he had previously been borrowing, and his first chapter is already on its way to me for my decision as to whether it has enough ungodliness in it or not. Poor Orion ! . . .

The Reader may remember Mark Twain's Whittier dinner

speech of 1877, and its disastrous effects. Now, in 1879, there was to be another *Atlantic* gathering: a breakfast to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, to which Clemens was invited. He was not eager to accept; it would naturally recall memories of two years before, but being urged by both Howells and Warner, he agreed to attend if they would permit him to speak. Mark Twain never lacked courage and he wanted to redeem himself. To Howells he wrote:

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston:*

Hartford, Nov 28, 1879.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—If anybody talks, there, I shall claim the right to say a word myself, and be heard among the very *earliest*—else it would be confoundedly awkward for me—and for the rest, too. But you may read what I say, beforehand, and strike out whatever you choose.

Of course I thought it wisest not to be there at all; but Warner took the opposite view, and most strenuously.

Speaking of Johnny's conclusion to become an outlaw, reminds me of Susie's newest and very earnest longing—to have crooked teeth and glasses—"like Mamma."

I would like to look into a child's head, once, and see what its processes are.

Yrs ever,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The matter turned out well. Clemens, once more introduced by Howells—this time conservatively, it may be said—delivered a delicate and fitting tribute to Doctor Holmes, full of graceful humour and grateful acknowledgment, the kind of speech he should have given at the Whittier dinner of two years before. No reference was made to his former disaster, and this time he came away covered with glory, and fully restored in his self-respect.

*A Tramp Abroad*, which Mark Twain had hoped to finish in Paris, and later in Elmira, for some reason would not come to an end. In December, in Hartford, he was still working on it, and he would seem to have finished it, at last, rather by a decree than by any natural process of authorship.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston :

Hartford, Jan. 8, '80.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Am waiting for Patrick to come with the carriage. Mrs. Clemens and I are starting (without the children) to stay indefinitely in Elmira. The wear and tear of settling the house broke her down, and she has been growing weaker and weaker for a fortnight. All that time—in fact ever since I saw you—I have been fighting a life-and-death battle with this infernal book and *hoping* to get done some day. I required 300 pages of MS, and I have written near 600 since I saw you—and tore it all up except 288. This I was about to tear up yesterday and begin again, when Mrs. Perkins came up to the billiard room and said, “ You will never get any woman to do the thing necessary to save her life by mere *persuasion* ; you see you have wasted your words for three weeks ; it is time to use *force* ; she *must* have a change ; take her home and leave the children here.”

I said, “ If there is one death that is painfuller than another, may I get it if I don't do that thing.”

So I took the 288 pages to Bliss and told him that was the very last line I should ever write on this book. (A book which required 2600 pages of MS, and I have written nearer four thousand, first and last.)

I am as soary (and flighty) as a rocket, to-day, with the unutterable joy of getting that Old Man of the Sea off my back, where he has been roosting for more than a year and a half. Next time I make a contract before writing the book, may I suffer the righteous penalty and be burnt, like the injudicious believer.

I am mighty glad you are done your book (this is from a man who, above all others, feels how much that sentence means) and am also mighty glad you have begun the next (this is also from a man who knows the felicity of *that*, and means straightway to enjoy it.) The Undis-

covered starts off delightfully—I have read it aloud to Mrs. C. and we vastly enjoyed it.

Well, time's about up—must drop a line to Aldrich.

Yrs ever,

MARK

In a letter which Mark Twain wrote to his brother Orion at this period we get the first hint of a venture which was to play an increasingly important part in the Hartford home and fortunes during the next ten or a dozen years. This was the type-setting machine investment, which, in the end, all but wrecked Mark Twain's finances. There is but a brief mention of it in the letter to Orion, and the letter itself is not worth preserving, but as references to the "machine" appear with increasing frequency, it seems proper to record here its first mention. In the same letter he suggests to his brother that he undertake an absolutely truthful autobiography, a confession in which nothing is to be withheld. He cites the value of Casanova's memories, and the confessions of Rousseau. Of course, any literary suggestion from "Brother Sam" was gospel to Orion, who began at once piling up manuscript at a great rate.

Meantime, Mark Twain himself, having got *A Tramp Abroad* on the presses, was at work with enthusiasm on a story begun nearly three years before at Quarry Farm—a story for children—its name, as he called it then, "The Little Prince and The Little Pauper."

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Mch. 11, '80.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— . . . I take so much pleasure in my story that I am loth to hurry, not wanting to get it done. Did I ever tell you the plot of it? It begins at 9 a.m., Jan. 27, 1547, seventeen and a half hours before Henry VIII's death, by the swapping of clothes *and places*, between the prince of Wales and a pauper boy of the same age and countenance (and half as much learning and still more genius and imagination) and after that, the rightful small King has a rough time among tramps and ruffians in the country parts of Kent, whilst the small bogus

King has a gilded and worshipped and dreary and restrained and cussed time of it on the throne—and this all goes on for three weeks—till the midst of the coronation grandeurs in Westminster Abbey, Feb. 20, when the ragged true King forces his way in but cannot prove his genuineness—until the bogus King, by a remembered incident of the first day is able to prove it *for* him—whereupon clothes are changed and the coronation proceeds under the new and rightful conditions.

My idea is to afford a realizing sense of the exceeding severity of the laws of that day by inflicting some of their penalties upon the King himself and allowing him a chance to see the rest of them applied to others—all of which is to account for certain mildnesses which distinguished Edward VI's reign from those that preceded and followed it.

Imagine *this* fact—I have even fascinated Mrs. Clemens with this yarn for youth. My stuff generally gets considerable damning with faint praise out of her, but this time it is all the other way. She is become the horse-leech's daughter and my mill doesn't grind fast enough to suit her. This is no mean triumph, my dear sir. . . .

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Orion Clemens, meantime, was forwarding his manuscript, and for once seems to have won his brother's approval, so much so that Mark Twain was willing, indeed anxious, that Howells should run the “autobiography” in the *Atlantic*.

*To Orion Clemens :*

May 6, '80.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is a model autobiography.

Continue to develop your character in the same gradual inconspicuous and apparently unconscious way. The reader, up to this time, may have his doubts, perhaps, but he can't say decidedly, “This writer is not such a

simpleton as he has been letting on to be." Keep him in that state of mind. If, when you shall have finished, the reader shall say, "The man is an ass, but I really don't know whether *he* knows it or not," your work will be a triumph.

Stop *re-writing*. I saw places in your last batch where re-writing had done formidable injury. Do not try to find those places, else you will mar them further by trying to better them. It is perilous to revise a book while it is under way. All of us have injured our books in that foolish way.

Keep in mind what I told you—when you recollect something which belonged in an earlier chapter, do not go back, but jam it in *where you are*. Discursiveness does not hurt an autobiography in the least.

I have penciled the MS here and there, but have not needed to make any criticisms or to knock out anything.

The elder Bliss has heart disease badly, and thenceforth his life hangs upon a thread.

Yr Bro

SAM.

But Howells could not bring himself to print so frank a confession as Orion had been willing to make. "It wrung my heart," he said, "and I felt haggard after I had finished it. The writer's soul is laid bare; it is shocking." Howells added that the best touches in it were those which made one acquainted with the writer's brother; that is to say, Mark Twain, and that these would prove valuable material hereafter—a true prophecy, for Mark Twain's early biography would have lacked most of its vital incident, and at least half of its background, without those faithful chapters, fortunately preserved. Had Orion continued, as he began, the work might have proved an important contribution to literature, but he went trailing off into by-paths of theology and discussion where the interest was lost. There were, perhaps, as many as two thousand pages of it, which few could undertake to read.

Mark Twain's mind was always busy with plans and inventions, many of them of serious intent, some semi-serious, others of a purely whimsical character. Once he proposed a "Modest

Club," of which the first and main qualification for membership was modesty. "At present," he wrote, "I am the only member; and as the modesty required must be of a quite aggravated type, the enterprise did seem for a time doomed to stop dead still with myself, for lack of further material; but upon reflection I have come to the conclusion that you are eligible. Therefore, I have held a meeting and voted to offer you the distinction of membership. I do not know that we can find any others, though I have had some thought of Hay, Warner, Twichell, Aldrich, Osgood, Fields, Higginson, and a few more—together with Mrs. Howells, Mrs. Clemens, and certain others of the sex."

Howells replied that the only reason he had for not joining the Modest Club was that he was too modest—too modest to confess his modesty. "If I could get over this difficulty I should like to join, for I approve highly of the Club and its object. . . . It ought to be given an annual dinner at the public expense. If you think I am not too modest you may put my name down and I will try to think the same of you. Mrs. Howells applauded the notion of the club from the very first. She said that she knew *one* thing: that she was modest enough, *anyway*. Her manner of saying it implied that the other persons you had named were not, and created a painful impression in my mind. I have sent your letter and the rules to Hay, but I doubt his modesty. He will think he has a *right* to belong to it as much as you or I; whereas, other people ought only to be admitted on sufferance."

Our next letter to Howells is, in the main, pure foolery, but we get in it a hint of what was to become in time one of Mark Twain's strongest interests, the matter of copyright. He had both a personal and general interest in the subject. His own books were constantly pirated in Canada, and the rights of foreign authors were not respected in America. We have already seen how he had drawn a petition which Holmes, Lowell, Longfellow, and others were to sign, and while nothing had come of this plan he had never ceased to formulate others. Yet he hesitated when he found that the proposed protection was likely to work a hardship to readers of the poorer class. Once he wrote: "My notions have mightily changed lately. . . . I can buy a lot of the copyright classics, in paper, at from three to thirty cents apiece. These things must find their way into the very kitchens and hovels of the country. . . . And even if the treaty *will* kill Canadian piracy, and thus save me an average of \$5,000 a year, I am down on it anyway, and I'd like cussed well to write an article opposing the treaty."

*To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass. :*

Thursday, June 6th, 1880.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—There you stick, at Belmont, and now I'm going to Washington for a few days; and of course, between you and Providence that visit is going to get mixed, and you'll have been here and gone again just about the time I get back. Bother it all, I wanted to astonish you with a chapter or two from Orion's latest book—not the seventeen which he has begun in the last four months, but the one which he began last week.

Last night, when I went to bed, Mrs. Clemens said, "George didn't take the cat down to the cellar—Rosa says he has left it shut up in the conservatory." So I went down to attend to Abner (the cat). About 3 in the morning Mrs. C. woke me and said, "I do believe I hear that cat in the drawing-room—what did you do with him?" I answered up with the confidence of a man who has managed to do the right thing for once, and said "I opened the conservatory doors, took the library off the alarm, and spread everything open, so that there wasn't any obstruction between him and the cellar." Language wasn't capable of conveying this woman's disgust. But the sense of what she said, was, "He couldn't have done any harm in the conservatory—so you must go and make the entire house free to him and the burglars, imagining that he will prefer the coal-bins to the drawing-room. If you had had Mr. Howells to help you, I should have admired but not been astonished, because I should know that *together* you would be equal to it; but how you managed to contrive such a stately blunder all by yourself, is what I cannot understand."

So, you see, even *she* knows how to appreciate our gifts.

Brisk times here.—Saturday, these things happened: Our neighbor Chas. Smith was stricken with heart disease, and came near joining the majority; my publisher, Bliss, ditto, ditto; a neighbor's child died; neighbor



Whitmore's sixth child added to his five other cases of measles ; neighbor Niles sent for, and responded ; Susie Warner down, abed ; Mrs. George Warner threatened with death during several hours ; her son Frank, whilst imitating the marvels in Barnum's circus bills, thrown from his aged horse and brought home insensible : Warner's friend Max Yortzburgh, shot in the back by a locomotive and broken into 32 distinct pieces and his life threatened ; and Mrs. Clemens, after writing all these cheerful things to Clara Spaulding, taken at midnight, and if the doctor had not been pretty prompt the contemplated Clemens would have called before his apartments were ready.

However, everybody is all right now, except Yortzburgh, and he is mending—that is, he is *being* mended. I knocked off, during these stirring times, and don't intend to go to work again till we go away for the Summer, 3 or 6 weeks hence. So I am writing to you not because I have anything to say, but because you don't have to answer and I need something to do this afternoon. . . .

I have a letter from a Congressman this morning, and he says Congress couldn't be persuaded to bother about Canadian pirates at a time like this when *all* legislation must have a political and Presidential bearing, else Congress won't look at it. So have changed my mind and my course ; I go north, to kill a pirate. I must procure repose *some* way, else I cannot get down to work again.

Pray offer my most sincere and respectful approval to the President—is approval the proper word ? I find it is the one I most value here in the household and seldomest get.

With our affection to you both.

Yrs ever

MARK.

It was always dangerous to send strangers with letters of introduction to Mark Twain. They were so apt to arrive at the wrong time, or to find him in the wrong mood. Howells was willing to risk it, and that the result was only amusing instead of tragic is the best proof of their friendship.

*To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass. :*

June 9, '80.

Well, old practical joker, the corpse of Mr. X—— has been here, and I have bedded it and fed it, and put down my work during 24 hours and tried my level best to make it do something, or say something, or appreciate something—but no, it was *worse* than Lazarus. A kind-hearted, well-meaning corpse was the Boston young man, but lawsy bless me, horribly dull company. Now, old man, unless you have great confidence in Mr. X's judgment, you ought to make him submit his article to you before he prints it. For only think how true I was to you : Every hour that he was here I was saying, gloatingly, " O G——d——you, when you are in bed and your light out, I will fix you " (meaning to kill him) . . . but then the thought would follow—" No, Howells sent him—he shall be spared, he shall be respected—he shall travel hell-wards by his own route."

Breakfast is frozen by this time, and Mrs. Clemens correspondingly hot. Good bye.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

\*

" I did not expect you to ask that man to *live* with you," Howells answered. " What I was afraid of was that you would turn him out of doors, on sight, and so I tried to put in a good word for him. After this when I want you to board people, I'll ask you. I am sorry for your suffering. I suppose I have mostly lost my smell for bores ; but yours is preternaturally keen."

*To Rev. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Quarry Farm, Aug. 29 ['80].

DEAR OLD JOE,—Concerning Jean Clemens, if anybody said he " didn't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog," I should think he was convicting himself of being a pretty poor sort of observer. . . . I will not go into details ; it is not necessary ; you will soon be

in Hartford, where I have already hired a hall; the admission fee will be but a trifle.

It is curious to note the change in the stock-quotations of the Affection Board brought about by throwing this new security on the market. Four weeks ago the children still put Mamma at the head of the list right along, where she had always been. But now :

Jean	
Mamma	
Motley	} cats.
Fraulein	
Papa	

That is the way it stands, now. Mamma is become No. 2; I have dropped from No. 4, and am become No. 5. Some time ago it used to be nip and tuck between me and the cats, but after the cats "developed" I didn't stand any more show.

I've got a swollen ear; so I take advantage of it to lie abed most of the day, and read and smoke and scribble and have a good time. Last evening Livy said with deep concern, "O dear, I believe an abscess is forming in your ear."

I responded as the poet would have done if he had had a cold in the head—

"Tis said that abscess conquers love,  
But O believe it not."

This made a coolness.

Been reading Daniel Webster's Private Correspondence. Have read a hundred of his diffuse, concerted, "eloquent," bathotic (or bathostic) letters written in that dim (no, vanished) Past when he was a student; and Lord, to think that this boy who is so real to me now, and so booming with fresh young blood and bountiful life, and sappy cynicisms about girls, has since climbed the Alps of fame and stood against the sun one brief tremendous moment

with the world's eyes upon him, and then—f-z-t-! where is he? Why the only *long* thing, the only *real* thing about the whole shadowy business is the sense of the lagging dull and hoary lapse of time that has drifted by since then; a vast empty level, it seems, with a formless spectre glimpsed fitfully through the smoke and mist that lie along its remote verge.

Well, we are all getting along here first-rate; Livy gains strength daily, and sits up a deal; the baby is five weeks old and—but no more of this; somebody may be reading *this* letter 80 years hence. And so, my friend (you pitying snob, I mean, who are holding this yellow paper in your hand in 1960,) save yourself the trouble of looking further; I know how pathetically trivial our small concerns will seem to you, and I will not let your eye profane them. No, I keep my news; you keep your compassion. Suffice it you to know, scoffer and ribald, that the little child is old and blind, now, and once more toothless; and the rest of us are shadows, these many, many years. Yes, and *your* time cometh!

MARK.

At the Farm that year Mark Twain was working on *The Prince and the Pauper*, and, according to a letter to Aldrich, brought it to an end September 14th. The book by Aldrich here mentioned was *The Stillwater Tragedy*.

*To T. B. Aldrich, in Ponkapog, Mass. :*

Elmira, Sept. 15, '80.

MY DEAR ALDRICH,—Thank you ever so much for the book—I had already finished it, and prodigiously enjoyed it, in the periodical of the notorious Howells, but it hits Mrs. Clemens just right, for she is having a reading holiday, now, for the first time in some months; so between-times, when the new baby is asleep and strengthening up for another attempt to take possession of this place, she

is going to read it. Her strong friendship for you makes her think she is going to like it.

I finished a story yesterday, myself. I counted up and found it between sixty and eighty thousand words—about the size of your book. It is for boys and girls—been at work at it several years, off and on.

I hope Howells is enjoying his journey to the Pacific. He wrote me that you and Osgood were going, also, but I doubted it, believing he was in liquor when he wrote it. In my opinion, this universal applause over his book is going to land that man in a Retreat inside of two months. I notice the papers say mighty fine things about your book, too. You ought to try to get into the same establishment with Howells. But applause does not affect me—I am always calm—this is because I am used to it.

Well, good-bye, my boy, and good luck to you. Mrs. Clemens asks me to send her warmest regards to you and Mrs. Aldrich—which I do, and add those of

Yrs ever

MARK.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Sunday, Oct. 24 '80.

. . . I'm laying for that Encyclopedical Scotchman—and he'll need to lock the door behind him, when he comes in ; otherwise when he hears my proposed tariff his skin will probably crawl away with him. He is accustomed to seeing the publisher impoverish the author—that spectacle must be getting stale to him—if he contracts with the undersigned he will experience a change in that programme that will make the enamel peel off his teeth for very surprise—and joy. No, that last is what Mrs. Clemens thinks—but it's not so. The proposed work is growing, mightily, in my estimation, day by day ; and I'm not going to throw it away for any mere trifle. If I

make a contract with the canny Scot, I will then tell him the plan which you and I have devised (that of taking in the humor of *all* countries)—otherwise I'll keep it to myself, I think. Why should we assist our fellowman for mere love of God?

Yrs ever

MARK.

The "Encyclopedical Scotchman" mentioned in the preceding letter was the publisher Gebbie, who had a plan to engage Howells and Clemens to prepare some sort of anthology of the world's literature. The idea came to nothing, though the other plan mentioned—for a library of humour—in time grew into a book.

Mark Twain's contracts with Bliss for the publication of his books on the subscription plan had been made on a royalty basis, beginning with 5 per cent on *The Innocents Abroad*, increasing to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on *Roughing It*, and to 10 per cent. on later books. Bliss had held that these later percentages fairly represented one half the profits. Clemens, however, had never been fully satisfied, and his brother Orion had more than once urged him to demand a specific contract on the half-profit basis. The agreement for the publication of *A Tramp Abroad* was made on these terms. Bliss died before Clemens received his first statement of sales. Whatever may have been the facts under earlier conditions, the statement proved to Mark Twain's satisfaction, at least, that the half-profit arrangement was to his advantage. It produced another result; it gave Samuel Clemens an excuse to place his brother Orion in a position of independence.

*To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa :*

Sunday, Oct 24 '80.

MY DEAR BRO.,—Bliss is dead. The aspect of the balance-sheet is enlightening. It reveals the fact, through my present contract, (which is for half the profits on the book above actual cost of paper, printing and binding,) that I have lost considerably by all this nonsense <sup>1</sup>—sixty thousand dollars, I should say—and if Bliss were alive

<sup>1</sup> Percentage contracts on his former books.

I would stay with the concern and get it all back; for on each new book I would require a portion of that back pay; but as it is (*this in the very strictest confidence,*) I shall probably go to a new publisher 6 or 8 months hence, for I am afraid Frank, with his poor health, will lack push and drive.

Out of the suspicions you bred in me years ago, has grown this result,—to wit, that I shall within the twelve-month get \$40,000 out of this “Tramp” instead of \$20,000. Twenty thousand dollars, after taxes and other expenses are stripped away, is worth to the investor about \$75 a month—so I shall tell Mr. Perkins to make your check that amount per month, hereafter, while our income is able to afford it. This ends the loan business; and hereafter you can reflect that you are living not on borrowed money but on money which you have squarely earned, and which has no taint or savor of charity about it—and you can also reflect that the money you have been receiving of me all these years is interest charged against the heavy bill which the next publisher will have to stand who gets a book of mine. . . .

With love from us

Y aff

\$25 enclosed.

SAM.

The Uncle Remus tales of Joel Chandler Harris gave Mark Twain great pleasure. He frequently read them aloud, not only at home but in public. Finally, he wrote Harris, expressing his warm appreciation, and mentioning one of the negro stories of his own childhood, “The Golden Arm,” which he urged Harris to look up and add to his collection. “You have pinned a proud feather in Uncle Remus’s cap,” replied Harris. “I do not know what higher honour he could have than to appear before the Hartford public arm in arm with Mark Twain.” He disclaimed any originalty for the stories, adding, “I understand that my relations toward Uncle Remus are similar to those that exist between an almanac maker and the calendar.” He had not heard the “Golden Arm” story and asked for the outlines; also for some publishing advice, out of Mark Twain’s long experience.

*To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta :*

Elmira, N. Y., Aug. 10.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,—You can argue *yourself* into the delusion that the principle of life is in the stories themselves and not in their setting ; but you will save labor by stopping with that solitary convert, for he is the only intelligent one you will bag. In reality the stories are only alligator pears—one merely eats them for the sake of the salad-dressing. Uncle Remus is most deftly drawn, and is a lovable and delightful creation ; he, and the little boy, and their relations with each other, are high and fine literature, and worthy to live, for their own sakes ; and certainly the stories are not to be credited with *them*. But enough of this ; I seem to be proving to the man that made the multiplication table that twice one are two.

I have been thinking, yesterday and to-day (plenty of chance to think, as I am abed with lumbago at our little summering farm among the solitudes of the Mountain-tops,) and I have concluded that I can answer one of your questions with full confidence—thus : Make it a subscription book. Mighty few books that come strictly under the head of *literature* will sell by subscription ; but if Uncle Remus won't, the gift of prophecy has departed out of me. When a book *will* sell by subscription, it will sell two or three times as many copies as it would in the trade ; and the profit is bulkier because the retail price is greater. . . .

You didn't ask me for a subscription-publisher. If you had, I should have recommended Osgood to you. He inaugurates his subscription department with my new book in the fall. . .

Now the doctor has been here and tried to interrupt my yarn about "The Golden Arm," but I've got through, anyway.

Of course I *tell* it in the negro dialect—that is necessary ;



but I have not written it so, for I can't spell it in your matchless way. It is marvelous the way you and Cable spell the negro and creole dialects.

Two grand features are lost in print : the weird wailing, the rising and falling cadences of the wind, so easily mimicked with one's mouth ; and the impressive pauses and eloquent silences, and subdued utterances, toward the end of the yarn (which chain the attention of the children hand and foot, and they sit with parted lips and breathless, to be wrenched limb from limb with the sudden and appalling " You got it ").

Old Uncle Dan'l, a slave of my uncle's<sup>1</sup> aged 60, used to tell us children yarns every night by the kitchen fire (no other light) ; and the last yarn demanded, every night, was this one. By this time there was but a ghastly blaze or two flickering about the back-log. We would huddle close about the old man, and begin to shudder with the first familiar words ; and under the spell of his impressive delivery we always fell a prey to that climax at the end when the rigid black shape in the twilight sprang at us with a shout.

When you come to glance at the tale you will recollect it—it is as common and familiar as the Tar Baby. Work up the atmosphere with your customary skill and it will " go " in print.

Lumbago seems to make a body garrulous—but you'll forgive it. Truly yours S. L. CLEMENS.

Harris, receiving the outlines of the old Missouri tale, presently announced that he had dug up its Georgia relative, an interesting variant, as we gather from Mark Twain's reply.

*To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta :*

Hartford, '81.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,—I was very sure you would run across that Story somewhere, and am glad you have.

<sup>1</sup> According to Orion Clemens, ten years older, it was their own man-of-all-work, " Uncle Ned."

A Drummond light—no, I mean a Brush light—is thrown upon the negro estimate of values by his willingness to risk his soul and his mighty peace forever for the sake of a silver sev'm-punce. And this form of the story seems rather nearer the true field-hand standard than that achieved by my Florida, Mo., negroes with their sumptuous arm of solid gold.

I judge you haven't received my new book yet—however, you will in a day or two. Meantime you must not take it ill if I drop Osgood a hint about your proposed story of slave life. . . .

When you come north I wish you would drop me a line and then follow it in person and give me a day or two at our house in Hartford. If you will, I will snatch Osgood down from Boston, and you won't have to go there at all unless you want to. Please to bear this strictly in mind, and don't forget it.

Sincerely yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

Clemens now and then found it necessary to pay a visit to Canada in the effort to protect his copyright. He usually had a grand time on these trips, being lavishly entertained by the Canadian literary fraternity. In November, 1881, he made one of these journeys in the interest of *The Prince and the Pauper*, this time with Osgood, who was now his publisher. In letters written home we get a hint of his diversions. The Monsieur Frechette mentioned was a Canadian poet of considerable distinction. "Clara" was Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira, who had accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Clemens to Europe in 1873, and again in 1878. Later she became Mrs. John B. Stanchfield, of New York City.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford :*

Montreal, Nov. 28 '81.

Livy darling, you and Clara ought to have been at breakfast in the great dining room this morning. English female faces, distinctive English costumes, strange and marvelous English gaits—and yet such honest, honorable,

clean-souled countenances, just as these English women almost always have, you know. Right away—

But they've come to take me to the top of Mount Royal, it being a cold, dry, sunny, magnificent day. Going in a sleigh.

Yours lovingly,

SAML.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford :*

Montreal, Sunday, November 27, 1881.

Livy dear, a mouse kept me awake last night till 3 or 4 o'clock—so I am lying abed this morning. I would not give sixpence to be out yonder in the storm, although it is only snow.

[The above paragraph is written in the form of a rebus illustrated with various sketches.]

There—that's for the children—was not sure that they could read writing; especially Jean, who is strangely ignorant in some things.

I can only look out upon the beautiful snow-storm, past the vigorous blaze of my fire; and upon the snow-veiled buildings which I have sketched; and upon the churchward drifting umbrellas; and upon the buffalo-clad cabmen stamping their feet and thrashing their arms on the corner yonder: but I also look out upon the spot where the first white men stood, in the neighborhood of four hundred years ago, admiring the mighty stretch of leafy solitudes, and being admired and marveled at by an eager multitude of naked savages. The discoverer of this region, and namer of it, Jacques Cartier, has a square named for him in the city. I wish you were here; you would enjoy your birthday, I think.

I hoped for a letter, and thought I had one when the mail was handed in, a minute ago, but it was only that

note from Sylvester Baxter. You must write—do you hear ?—or I will be remiss myself.

Give my love and a kiss to the children, and ask them to give you my love and a kiss from

SAML.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford :*

Quebec, Sunday. '81.

Livy darling, I received a letter from Monsieur Frechette this morning, in which certain citizens of Montreal tendered me a public dinner next Thursday, and by Osgood's advice I accepted it. I would have accepted anyway, and very cheerfully but for the delay of two days—for I was purposing to go to Boston Tuesday and home Wednesday; whereas, now I go to Boston Friday and home Saturday. I have to go by Boston on account of business.

We drove about the steep hills and narrow, crooked streets of this old town during three hours, yesterday, in a sleigh, in a driving snow-storm. The people here don't mind snow; they were all out, plodding around on their affairs—especially the children, who were wallowing around everywhere, like snow images, and having a mighty good time. I wish I could describe the winter costume of the young girls, but I can't. It is grave and simple, but graceful and pretty—the top of it is a brimless fur cap. Maybe it is the costume that makes pretty girls seem so monotonously plenty here. It was a kind of relief to strike a homely face occasionally.

You descend into some of the streets by long, deep stairways; and in the strong moonlight, last night, these were very picturesque. I did wish you were here to see these things. You couldn't by any possibility sleep in these beds, though, or enjoy the food.

Good night, sweetheart, and give my respects to the cubs.

SAML.

It had been hoped that W. D. Howells would join the Canadian excursion, but Howells was not very well that autumn. He wrote that he had been in bed five weeks, "most of the time recovering; so you see how bad I must have been to begin with. But now I am out of any first-class pain; I have a good appetite, and I am as abusive and peremptory as Guiteau."

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Dec. 16 '81.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It was a sharp disappointment—your inability to connect, on the Canadian raid. What a gaudy good time we should have had !

Disappointed, again, when I got back to Boston; for I was promising myself half an hour's look at you, in Belmont; but your note to Osgood showed that that could not be allowed out yet.

The Atlantic arrived an hour ago, and your faultless and delicious Police Report brought that blamed Joe Twichell powerfully before me. *There's* a man who can tell such things himself (by word of mouth,) and has as sure an eye for detecting a thing that is before his eyes, as any man in the world, perhaps—then why in the nation doesn't he report himself with a pen ?

One of those drenching days last week, he slopped down town with his cubs, and visited a poor little beggarly shed where were a dwarf, a fat woman, and a giant of honest eight feet, on exhibition behind tawdry show-canvases, but with nobody to exhibit to. The giant had a broom, and was cleaning up and fixing around, diligently. Joe conceived the idea of getting some talk out of him. Now that *never* would have occurred to me. So he dropped in under the man's elbow, dogged him patiently around, prodding him with questions and getting irritated snarls in return which would have finished me early—but at last one of Joe's random shafts drove the centre of that giant's sympathies somehow, and fetched him. The fountains of his great deep were broken up, and he

rained a flood of personal history that was unspeakably entertaining.

Among other things it turned out that he had been a Turkish (native) colonel, and had fought all through the Crimean war—and so, for the first time, Joe got a picture of the Charge of the Six Hundred that made him *see* the living spectacle, the flash of flag and tongue-flame, the rolling smoke, and hear the booming of the guns ; and for the first time also, he heard the reasons for that wild charge delivered from the mouth of a master, and realized that nobody had “blundered,” but that a cold, logical, military brain had perceived this one and sole way to win an already lost battle, and so gave the command and did achieve the victory.

And mind you Joe was able to come up here, days afterwards, and reproduce that giant’s picturesque and admirable history. But dern him, he can’t *write* it—which is all wrong, and not as it should be. . . .

But, by jings ! the postman will be here in a minute ; so, congratulations upon your mending health, and gratitude that it is mending ;—and love to you all.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

Don’t answer—I spare the sick.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Jan. 28 ’82.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Nobody knows better than I, that there are times when swearing cannot meet the emergency. How sharply I feel that, at this moment. Not a single profane word has issued from my lips this morning—I have not even had the *impulse* to swear, so wholly ineffectual would swearing have manifestly been, in the circumstances. But I will tell you about it.

About three weeks ago, a sensitive friend, approaching his revelation cautiously, intimated that the N. Y. Tribune

was engaged in a kind of crusade against me. This seemed a higher compliment than I deserved ; but no matter, it made me very angry. I asked many questions, and gathered, in substance, this : Since Reid's return from Europe, the Tribune had been flinging sneers and brutalities at me with such persistent frequency " as to attract general remark." I was an angered—which is just as good an expression, I take it, as an *hungered*. Next, I learned that Osgood, among the rest of the " general," was worrying over these constant and pitiless attacks. Next came the testimony of another friend, that the attacks were not merely " frequent," but " almost *daily*." Reflect upon that : " Almost *daily* " insults, for two months on a stretch. What would *you* have done ?

As for me, I did the thing which was the natural thing for me to do, that is, I set about contriving a plan to accomplish one or the other of two things : 1. Force a peace ; or 2. Get revenge. When I got my plan finished, it pleased me marvelously. It was in six or seven sections, each section to be used in its turn and by itself ; the assault to begin at once with No. 1, and the rest to follow, one after the other, to keep the communication open while I wrote my biography of Reid. I meant to wind up with this latter great work, and then dismiss the subject for good.

Well, ever since then I have worked day and night making notes and collecting and classifying material. I've got collectors at work in England. I went to New York and sat three hours taking evidence while a stenographer set it down. As my labors grew, so also grew my fascination. Malice and malignity faded out of me—or maybe I *drove* them out of me, knowing that a malignant book would hurt nobody but the fool who wrote it. I got thoroughly in love with this work ; for I saw that I was going to write a book which the very devils and angels themselves would delight to read, and which would draw disapproval from nobody but the hero of it, (and Mrs. Clemens, who

was bitter against the whole thing ) One part of my plan was so delicious that I *had* to try my hand on it right away, just for the luxury of it. I set about it, and sure enough it panned out to admiration. I wrote that chapter most carefully, and I couldn't find a fault with it. (It was not for the biography—no, it belonged to an immediate and deadlier project.)

Well, five days ago, this thought came into my mind—(from Mrs. Clemens's): "Wouldn't it be well to make *sure* that the attacks have been 'almost daily' ?—and to also make sure that their number and character will justify me in doing what I am proposing to do ?"

I at once set a man to work in New York to seek out and copy every unpleasant reference which had been made to me in the Tribune from Nov. 1st to date. On my own part I began to watch the current numbers, for I had subscribed for the paper.

The result arrived from my New York man this morning. O, what a pitiable wreck of high hopes! The "almost daily" assaults, for two months, consist of—1. Adverse criticism of P. & P. from an enraged idiot in the London Athenæum; 2, Paragraph from some indignant Englishman in the Pall Mall Gazette who pays me the vast compliment of gravely rebuking some imaginary ass who has set me up in the neighborhood of Rabelais; 3, A remark of the Tribune's about the Montreal dinner, touched with an almost invisible satire; 4, A remark of the Tribune's about refusal of Canadian copyright, not complimentary, but not necessarily malicious—and of course adverse criticism which is not malicious is a thing which none but fools irritate themselves about.

There—that is the prodigious bugaboo, in its entirety! Can you conceive of a man's getting himself into a sweat over so diminutive a provocation? I am sure I can't. What the devil can those friends of mine have been thinking about, to spread these 3 or 4 harmless things out into two months of daily sneers and affronts? The whole



offense, boiled down, amounts to just this: one uncourteous remark of the Tribune about my *book*—not me—between Nov. 1 and Dec. 20; and a couple of foreign criticisms (of my writings, not me,) between Nov. 1 and Jan. 26! If I can't stand that amount of friction, I certainly need reconstruction. Further boiled down, this vast outpouring of malice amounts to simply this: *one* jest from the Tribune (one can make nothing more serious than that out of it.) *One jest*—and that is all; for the foreign criticisms do not count, they being matters of news, and proper for publication in anybody's newspaper.

And to offset that one jest, the Tribune paid me one compliment Dec. 23, by publishing my note declining the New York New England dinner, while merely (in the same breath,) *mentioning* that similar letters were read from General Sherman and other men whom we all know to be persons of *real* consequence.

Well, my mountain has brought forth its mouse, and a sufficiently small mouse it is, God knows. And my three weeks' hard work have got to go into the ignominious pigeon-hole. Confound it, I could have earned ten thousand dollars with infinitely less trouble. However, I shouldn't have done it, for I am too lazy, now, in my sere and yellow leaf, to be willing to work for anything but love. . . . I kind of envy you people who are permitted for your righteousness' sake to dwell in a boarding house; not that I should *always* want to live in one, but I should like the change occasionally from this house-keeping slavery to that wild independence. A life of don't-care-a-damn in a boarding house is what I have asked for in many a secret prayer. I shall come by and by and require of you what you have offered me there.

Yours ever,

MARK.

Howells, who had already known something of the gathering storm, replied: "Your letter was an immense relief to me, for

although I had an abiding faith that you would get sick of your enterprise, I wasn't easy until I knew that you had given it up."

Joel Chandler Harris appears again in the letters of this period. Twichell, during a trip South about this time, had called on Harris with some sort of proposition or suggestion from Clemens that Harris appear with him in public, and tell, or read, the Remus stories from the platform. But Harris was abnormally diffident. Clemens later pronounced him "the shyest full-grown man" he had ever met, and the word which Twichell brought home evidently did not encourage the platform idea.

*To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta :*

Hartford, Apl. 2, '82.

*Private.*

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,—Jo Twichell brought me your note and told me of his talk with you. He said you didn't believe you would ever be able to master a sufficiency of reckless daring to make you comfortable and at ease before an audience. Well, I have thought out a device whereby I believe we can get around that difficulty. I will explain when I see you.

Jo says you want to go to Canada within a month or six weeks—I forget just exactly what he *did* say; but he intimated that that trip could be delayed a while, if necessary. If this is so, suppose you meet Osgood and me in New Orleans early in May—say somewhere between the 1st and 6th?

It will be well worth your while to do this, because the author who goes to Canada unposted, will not know what course to pursue [to secure copyright] when he gets there; he will find himself in a hopeless confusion as to what is the correct thing to do. Now Osgood is the only man in America who can lay out your course for you and tell you exactly what to do. Therefore, you just come to New Orleans and have a talk with him.

Our idea is to strike across lots and reach St. Louis the

20th of April—thence we propose to drift southward, stopping at some town a few hours or a night, every day, and making notes.

To escape the interviewers, I shall follow my usual course and use a fictitious name (*C. L. Samuel, of New York.*) I don't know what Osgood's name will be, but he can't use his own.

If you see your way to meet us in New Orleans, drop me a line, now, and as we approach that city I will telegraph you what day we shall arrive there.

I would go to Atlanta if I could, but shan't be able. We shall go back up the river to St. Paul, and thence by rail X-lots home.

(I am making this letter so dreadfully private and confidential because my movements must be kept secret, else I shan't be able to pick up the kind of book-material I want.)

If you are diffident, I suspect that you ought to let Osgood be your magazine-agent. He makes those people pay three or four times as much as an article is worth, whereas I never had the cheek to make them pay more than double.

Yrs Sincerely

S. L. CLEMENS.

"My backwardness is an affliction," wrote Harris. . . . "The ordeal of appearing on the stage would be a terrible one, but my experience is that when a diffident man does become familiar with his surroundings he has more impudence than his neighbours. Extremes meet."

He was sorely tempted, but his courage became as water at the thought of footlights and assembled listeners. Once in New York he appears to have been caught unawares at a Tile Club dinner and made to tell a story, but his agony was such that at the prospect of a similar ordeal in Boston he avoided that city and headed straight for Georgia and safety.

The New Orleans excursion with Osgood, as planned by Clemens, proved a great success. The little party took the steamer *Gold Dust* from St. Louis down river toward New Orleans. Clemens was quickly recognized, of course, and his

assumed name laid aside. The author of "Uncle Remus" made the trip to New Orleans. George W. Cable was there at the time, and we may believe that in the company of Mark Twain and Osgood those Southern authors passed two or three delightful days. Clemens also met his old teacher Bixby in New Orleans, and came back up the river with him, spending most of his time in the pilot-house, as in the old days. It was a glorious trip, and, reaching St. Louis, he continued it northward, stopping off at Hannibal and Quincy.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford :*

Quincy, Ill. May 17, '82.

Livy darling, I am desperately homesick. But I have promised Osgood, and must stick it out; otherwise I would take the train at once and break for home.

I have spent three delightful days in Hannibal, loitering around all day long, examining the old localities and talking with the grey-heads who were boys and girls with me 30 or 40 years ago. It has been a moving time. I spent my nights with John and Helen Garth, three miles from town, in their spacious and beautiful house. They were children with me, and afterwards schoolmates. Now they have a daughter 19 or 20 years old. Spent an hour, yesterday, with A. W. Lamb, who was not married when I saw him last. He married a young lady whom I knew. And now I have been talking with their grown-up sons and daughters. Lieutenant Hickman, the spruce young handsomely-uniformed volunteer of 1846, called on me—a grisly elephantine patriarch of 65 now, his grace all vanished.

That world which I knew in its blossoming youth is old and bowed and melancholy, now; its soft cheeks are leathery and wrinkled, the fire is gone out in its eyes, and the spring from its step. It will be dust and ashes when I come again. I have been clasping hands with the moribund—and usually they said, "It is for the last time."

Now I am under way again, upon this hideous trip to St. Paul, with a heart brimming full of thoughts and

images of you and Susie and Bay and the peerless Jean.  
And so good night, my love.

SAML.

William Dean Howells, at the age of forty-five, reached what many still regard his highest point of achievement in American realism. His novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, which was running as a *Century* serial during the summer of 1882, attracted wide attention, and upon its issue in book form took first place among his published novels.

*To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass. :*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I am in a state of wild enthusiasm over this July instalment of your story. It's perfectly dazzling—it's masterly—incomparable. Yet I heard you read it—without losing my balance. Well, the difference between your reading and your writing is—remarkable. I mean, in the effects produced and the impression left behind. Why, the one is to the other as is one of Joe Twichell's yarns repeated by a somnambulist. Goodness gracious, you read me a chapter, and it is a gentle, pearly dawn, with a sprinkle of faint stars in it ; but by and by I strike it in print, and shout to myself, " God bless us, how *has* that pallid former spectacle been turned into these gorgeous sunset splendors ! "

Well, I don't care how much you read your truck to me, you can't permanently damage it for me that way. It is always perfectly fresh and dazzling when I come on it in the magazine. Of course I recognize the *form* of it as being familiar—but that is all. That is, I remember it as pyrotechnic figures which you set up before me, dead and cold, but ready for the match—and *now* I see them touched off and all ablaze with blinding fires. You *can* read, if you want to, but you don't read worth a damn. I know you *can* read, because your readings of Cable and your repetitions of the German doctor's remarks prove that.

That's the best drunk scene—because the truest—that I ever read. There are touches in it that I never saw any writer take note of before. And they are set before the reader with amazing accuracy. How very drunk, and how recently drunk, and how altogether admirably drunk you must have been to enable you to contrive that masterpiece!

Why I didn't notice that that religious interview between Marcia and Mrs. Halleck was so deliciously humorous when you read it to me—but dear me, it's just too lovely for anything. (Wrote Clark to collar it for the "Library.")

Hang it, I know where the mystery is, now: When you are reading, you glide right along, and I don't get a chance to let the things soak home; but when I catch it in the magazine, I give a page 20 or 30 minutes in which to gently and thoroughly filter into me. Your humor is so very subtle, and elusive—(well, often it's just a vanishing breath of perfume which a body isn't certain he smelt till he stops and takes another smell) whereas you can smell other.

(Remainder obliterated.)

By the end of summer Howells was in Europe, and Clemens, in Elmira, was trying to finish his Mississippi book, which was giving him a great deal of trouble. It was usually so with his non-fiction books; his interest in them was not cumulative; he was prone to grow weary of them, while the menace of his publisher's contract was maddening. Howells's letters, meant to be comforting, or at least entertaining, did not always contribute to his peace of mind. The Library of American Humour which they had planned was an added burden.

In a letter from London, Howells writes of the good times he is having over there with Osgood, Hutton, John Hay, Aldrich, and Alma Tadema, excursiioning to Oxford, feasting, especially "at the Mitre Tavern, where they let you choose your dinner from the joints hanging from the rafter, and have passages that you lose yourself in every time you try to go to your room. . . . Couldn't you and Mrs. Clemens step over for a little while? . . . We have seen lots of nice people and have been most pleasantly

made of ; but I would rather have you smoke in my face and, talk for half a day just for pleasure, than to go to the best house or club in London."

*To W. D. Howells, in London :*

Hartford, Conn. Oct 30, 1882.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I do not expect to find you, so I shan't spend many words on you to wind up in the perdition of some European dead-letter office. I only just want to say that the closing installments of the story are prodigious. All along I was afraid it would be impossible for you to keep up so splendidly to the end ; but you were only, I see now, striking eleven. It is in these last chapters that you struck twelve. Go on and write ; you can write good books yet, but you can never match this one. And speaking of the book, I inclose something which has been happening here lately.

We have only just arrived at home, and I have not seen Clark on our matters. I cannot see him or any one else, until I get my book finished. The weather turned cold, and we had to rush home, while I still lacked thirty thousand words. I had been sick and got delayed. I am going to write all day and two thirds of the night, until the thing is done, or break down at it. The spur and burden of the contract are intolerable to me. I can endure the irritation of it no longer. I went to work at nine o'clock yesterday morning, and went to bed an hour after midnight. Result of the day, (mainly stolen from books, tho' credit given,) 9500 words, so I reduced my burden by one third in one day. It was five days work in one. I have nothing more to borrow or steal ; the rest must all be written. It is ten days work, and unless something breaks, it will be finished in five. We all send love to you and Mrs. Howells, and all the family.

Yours as ever,

MARK.

Again, from Villeneuve, on Lake Geneva, Howells wrote urging him this time to spend the winter with them in Florence, where they would write their great American Comedy of *Orme's Motor*, "which is to enrich us beyond the dreams of avarice. . . We could have a lot of fun writing it, and you could go home with some of the good old Etruscan malaria in your bones, instead of the wretched pinch-beck Hartford article that you are suffering from now . . . it's a great opportunity for you. Besides, nobody over there likes you half as well as I do."

It should be added that *Orme's Motor* was the provisional title that Clemens and Howells had selected for their comedy, which was to be built, in some measure, at least, around the character, or rather from the peculiarities, of Orion Clemens. The Cable mentioned in Mark Twain's reply is, of course, George W. Cable, who only a little while before had come up from New Orleans to conquer the North with his wonderful tales and readings.

*To W. D. Howells in Switzerland :*

Hartford, Nov. 4th, 1882.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Yes, it would be profitable for me to do that, because with your society to help me, I should swiftly finish this now apparently interminable book. But I cannot come, because I am not Boss here, and nothing but dynamite can move Mrs. Clemens away from home in the winter season.

I never had such a fight over a book in my life before. And the foolishhest part of the whole business is, that I started Osgood to editing it before I had finished writing it. As a consequence, large areas of it are condemned here and there and yonder, and I have the burden of these unfilled gaps harassing me and the thought of the broken continuity of the work, while I am at the same time trying to build the last quarter of the book. However, at last I have said with sufficient positiveness that I will finish the book at no particular date; that I will not hurry it; that I will not hurry myself; that I will take things easy and comfortably, write when I choose to write, leave it alone when I so prefer. The printers



must wait, the artists, the canvassers, and all the rest. I have got everything at a dead standstill, and that is where it ought to be, and that is where it must remain ; to follow any other policy would be to make the book worse than it already is. I ought to have finished it before showing to anybody, and then sent it across the ocean to you to be edited, as usual ; for you seem to be a great many shades happier than you deserve to be, and if I had thought of this thing earlier, I would have acted upon it and taken the tuck somewhat out of your jousness.

In the same mail with your letter, arrived the enclosed from Orme the motor man. You will observe that he has an office. I will explain that this is a law office and I think it probably does him as much good to have a law office without anything to do in it, as it would another man to have one with an active business attached. You see he is on the electric light lay now. Going to light the city and allow me to take all the stock if I want to. And he will manage it free of charge. It never would occur to this simple soul how much less costly it would be to me, to hire him on a good salary not to manage it. Do you observe the same old eagerness, the same old hurry, springing from the fear that if he does not move with the utmost swiftness, that colossal opportunity will escape him ? Now just fancy this same frantic plunging after vast opportunities, going on week after week with this same man, during fifty entire years, and he has not yet learned, in the slightest degree, that there isn’t any occasion to hurry ; that his vast opportunity will always wait ; and that whether it waits or flies, he certainly will never catch it. This immortal hopefulness, fortified by its immortal and unteachable misjudgment, is the immortal feature of this character, for a play ; and we will write that play. We should be fools else. That staccato post-script reads as if some new and mighty business were imminent, for it is slung on the paper telegraphically, all

the small words left out. I am afraid something newer and bigger than the electric light is swinging across his orbit. Save this letter for an inspiration. I have got a hundred more.

Cable has been here, creating worshippers on all hands. He is a marvelous talker on a deep subject. I do not see how even Spencer could unwind a thought more smoothly or orderly, and do it in a cleaner, clearer, crisper English. He astounded Twichell with his faculty. You know when it comes down to moral honesty, limpid innocence, and utterly blemishless piety, the Apostles were mere policemen to Cable; so with this in mind you must imagine him at a midnight dinner in Boston the other night, where we gathered around the board of the Summerset Club; Osgood, full, Boyle O'Reilly, full, Fairchild responsively loaded, and Aldrich and myself possessing the floor, and properly fortified. Cable told Mrs. Clemens when he returned here, that he seemed to have been entertaining himself with horses, and had a dreamy idea that he must have gone to Boston in a cattle-car. It was a very large time. He called it an orgy. And no doubt it was, viewed from his standpoint.

I wish I were in Switzerland, and I wish we could go to Florence; but we have to leave these delights to you; there is no helping it. We all join in love to you and all the family.

Yours as ever

MARK.

Mark Twain, in due season, finished the Mississippi book and placed it in Osgood's hands for publication. It was a sort of partnership arrangement in which Clemens was to furnish the money to make the book, and pay Osgood a percentage for handling it. It was, in fact, the beginning of Mark Twain's adventures as a publisher.

Howells was not as happy in Florence as he had hoped to be. The social life there overwhelmed him. Clemens, now free from the burden of his own book, was light of heart and full of ideas and news; also of sympathy and appreciation. Howells's

story of this time was "A Woman's Reason." Governor Jewell, of this letter, was Marshall Jewell, Governor of Connecticut from 1871 to 1873. Later, he was Minister to Russia, and in 1874 was United States Postmaster-General.

*To W. D. Howells, in Florence :*

Hartford, March 1st, 1883.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We got ourselves ground up in that same mill, once, in London, and another time in Paris. It is a kind of foretaste of hell. There is no way to avoid it except by the method which you have now chosen. One must live secretly and cut himself utterly off from the human race, or life in Europe becomes an unbearable burden and work an impossibility. I learned something last night, and maybe it may reconcile me to go to Europe again sometime. I attended one of the astonishingly popular lectures of a man by the name of Stoddard, who exhibits interesting stereopticon pictures and then knocks the interest all out of them with his comments upon them. But all the world go there to look and listen, and are apparently well satisfied. And they ought to be fully satisfied, if the lecturer would only keep still, or die in the first act. But he described how retired tradesmen and farmers in Holland load a lazy scow with the family and the household effects, and then loaf along the waterways of the low countries all the summer long, paying no visits, receiving none, and just lazying a heavenly life out in their own private unpestered society, and doing their literary work, if they have any, wholly uninterrupted. If you had hired such a boat and sent for us we should have a couple of satisfactory books ready for the press now with no marks of interruption, vexatious wearinesses, and other hellishnesses visible upon them anywhere. We shall have to do this another time. We have lost an opportunity for the present. Do you forget that Heaven is packed with a multitude of all nations and

that these people are all on the most familiar how-the-hell-are-you footing with Talmage swinging around the circle to all eternity hugging the saints and patriarchs and archangels, and forcing you to do the same unless you choose to make yourself an object of remark if you refrain? Then why do you try to get to Heaven? Be warned in time.

We have all read your two opening numbers in the *Century*, and consider them almost beyond praise. I hear no dissent from this verdict. I did not know there was an untouched personage in American life, but I had forgotten the auctioneer. You have photographed him accurately.

I have been an utterly free person for a month or two; and I do not believe I ever so greatly appreciated and enjoyed and realized the absence of the chains of slavery as I do this time. Usually my first waking thought in the morning is, "I have nothing to do to-day, I belong to nobody, I have ceased from being a slave." Of course the highest pleasure to be got out of freedom, and having nothing to do, is labor. Therefore I labor. But I take my time about it. I work one hour or four as happens to suit my mind, and quit when I please. And so these days are days of entire enjoyment. I told Clark the other day to jog along comfortable and not get in a sweat. I said I believed you would not be able to enjoy editing that library over there, where you have your own legitimate work to do and be pestered to death by society besides; therefore I thought if he got it ready for you against your return, that that would be best and pleasantest.

You remember Governor Jewell, and the night he told about Russia, down in the library. He was taken with a cold about three weeks ago, and I stepped over one evening, proposing to beguile an idle hour for him with a yarn or two, but was received at the door with whispers, and the information that he was dying. His case had been dangerous during that day only and he died that night,

two hours after I left. His taking off was a prodigious surprise, and his death has been most widely and sincerely regretted. Wm. E. Dodge, the father-in-law of one of Jewell's daughters, dropped suddenly dead the day before Jewell died, but Jewell died without knowing that. Jewell's widow went down to New York, to Dodge's house, the day after Jewell's funeral, and was to return here day before yesterday, and she did—in a coffin. She fell dead, of heart disease, while her trunks were being packed for her return home. Florence Strong, one of Jewell's daughters, who lives in Detroit, started East on an urgent telegram, but missed a connection somewhere, and did not arrive here in time to see her father alive. She was his favorite child, and they had always been like lovers together. He always sent her a box of fresh flowers once a week to the day of his death; a custom which he never suspended even when he was in Russia. Mrs. Strong had only just reached her Western home again when she was summoned to Hartford to attend her mother's funeral.

I have had the impulse to write you several times. I shall try to remember better henceforth.

With sincerest regards to all of you,

Yours as ever,

MARK.

Mark Twain made another trip to Canada in the interest of copyright—this time to protect the Mississippi book. When his journey was announced by the press, the Marquis of Lorne telegraphed an invitation inviting him to be his guest at Rideau Hall, in Ottawa. Clemens accepted, of course, and was handsomely entertained by the daughter of Queen Victoria and her husband, then Governor-General of Canada.

On his return to Hartford he found that Osgood had issued a curious little book, for which Clemens had prepared an introduction. It was an absurd volume, though originally issued with serious intent, its title being *The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English*.<sup>1</sup> Evidently the "New

<sup>1</sup> *The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English*, by Pedro Carolino, with an introduction by Mark Twain. Osgood, Boston, 1883. See, also, *Mark Twain A Biography*, chap. cxliii.

Guide " was prepared by some simple Portuguese soul with but slight knowledge of English beyond that which could be obtained from a dictionary, and his literal translations of English idioms are often startling, as, for instance, this one, taken at random :

" A little learneds are happies enough for to may to satisfy their fancies on the literature."

Mark Twain thought this quaint book might amuse his royal hostess, and forwarded a copy in what he considered to be the safe and proper form.

*To Col. De Winton, in Ottawa, Canada :*

Hartford, June 4, '83.

DEAR COLONEL DE WINTON,—I very much want to send a little book to her Royal Highness—the famous Portuguese phrase book ; but I do not know the etiquette of the matter, and I would not wittingly infringe any rule of propriety. It is a book which I perfectly well know will amuse her " some at most " if she has not seen it before, and will still amuse her " some at least," even if she has inspected it a hundred times already. So I will send the book to you, and you who know all about the proper observances will protect me from indiscretion, in case of need, by putting the said book in the fire, and remaining as dumb as I generally was when I was up there. I do not rebind the thing, because that would look as if I thought it worth keeping, whereas it is only worth glancing at and casting aside.

Will you please present my compliments to Mrs. De Winton and Mrs. Mackenzie ?—and I beg to make my sincere compliments to you, also, for your infinite kindnesses to me. I did have a delightful time up there, most certainly.

Truly yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. Although the introduction dates a year back, the book is only just now issued. A good long delay.

S. L. C.

Howells, writing from Venice, in April, manifested special interest in the play project. He returned to America in July. Clemens sent him word of welcome, with glowing reports of his own undertakings. The story on which he was piling up MS. was *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, begun seven years before at Quarry Farm. He had no great faith in it then, and though he had taken it up again in 1880, his interest had not lasted to its conclusion. This time, however, he was in the proper spirit, and the story would be finished.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, July 20, '83.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We are desperately glad you and your gang are home again—may you never travel again, till you go aloft or alow. Charley Clark has gone to the other side for a run—will be back in August. He has been sick, and needed the trip very much.

Mrs. Clemens had a long and wasting spell of sickness last Spring, but she is pulling up, now. The children are booming, and my health is ridiculous, it's so robust, notwithstanding the newspaper mis-reports.

I haven't piled up MS so in years as I have done since we came here to the farm three weeks and a half ago. Why, it's like old times, to step right into the study, damp from the breakfast table, and sail right in and sail right on, the whole day long, without thought of running short of stuff or words.

I wrote 4000 words to-day and I touch 3000 and upwards pretty often, and don't fall below 2600 any working day. And when I get fagged out I lie abed a couple of days and read and smoke and then go it again for 6 or 7 days. I have finished one small book, and am away along in a big one that I half-finished two or three years ago. I expect to complete it in a month or six weeks or two months more. And *I shall like* it, whether anybody else does or not.

It's a kind of companion to Tom Sawyer. There's a

raft episode from it in second or third chapter of *Life on the Mississippi*. . . .

I'm booming these days—got health and spirits to *waste*—got an overplus; and if I were at home we would write a play. But we must do it anyhow by and by.

We stay here till Sep. 10; then maybe a week at Indian Neck for sea air, then home.

We are powerful glad you are all back; and send love according.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

*To Orion Clemens and family in Keokuk, Ia. :*

Elmira, July 21, '83.

*Private.*

DEAR MA AND ORION AND MOLLIE—I don't know that I have anything new to report. . . .

. . . Day before yesterday I felt slightly warned to knock off work for one day. So I did it, and took the open air. Then I struck an idea for the instruction of the children, and went to work and carried it out. It took me all day. I measured off 817 feet of the road-way in our farm grounds, with a foot-rule, and then divided it up among the English reigns, from the Conqueror down to 1883, allowing one foot to the year. I whittled out a basket of little pegs and drove one in the ground at the beginning of each reign, and gave it that King's name.

I measured all the reigns exactly—as many feet to the reign as there were years in it. You can look out over the grounds and see the little pegs from the front door—some of them close together, like Richard II, Richard Cromwell, James II, &c; and some prodigiously wide apart, like Henry III, Edward III, George III, &c. It gives the children a realizing sense of the length or brevity of a reign. Shall invent a violent *game* to go with it.



And in bed, last night, I invented a way to play it indoors—in a far more voluminous way, as to multiplicity of dates and events—on a *cribbage board*.

Hello, supper's ready. Love to all. Good bye.

SAML.

Orion Clemens would naturally get excited over the idea of the game and its commercial possibilities. Not more so than his brother, however, who presently employed him to arrange a quantity of historical data which the game was to teach. For a season, indeed, interest in the game became a sort of mid-summer madness which pervaded the two households, at Keokuk and at Quarry Farm. Howells wrote his approval of the idea of "learning history by the running foot," which was a pun, even if unintentional, for in its out-door form it was a game of speed as well as knowledge.

There had been some delay and postponement in the matter of the play which Howells and Clemens agreed to write. They did not put in the entire month of October as they had planned, but they did put in a portion of that month, the latter half, working out their old idea. In the end it became a revival of Colonel Sellers, or rather a caricature of that extravagant, gentle-hearted old visionary. Clemens had always complained that the actor Raymond had never brought out the finer shades of Colonel Sellers's character, but Raymond in his worst performance never belied his original as did Howells and Clemens in his dramatic revival. These two, working together, let their imaginations run riot with disastrous results. The reader can judge something of this himself, from *The American Claimant*, the book which Mark Twain would later build from the play.

But at this time they thought it a great triumph. They had "cracked their sides" laughing over its construction, as Howells once said, and they thought the world would do the same over its performance. They decided to offer it to Raymond, but rather haughtily, indifferently, because any number of other actors would be waiting for it.

But this was a miscalculation. Raymond now turned the tables. Though favourable to the idea of a new play, he declared this one did not present his old Sellers at all, but a lunatic. In the end he returned the MS. with a brief note. Attempts had already been made to interest other actors, and these efforts would continue for some time.

The type-setting machine does not appear in the letters of this period, but it was an important factor, nevertheless. It was costing several thousand dollars a month for construction

and becoming a heavy drain on Mark Twain's finances. It was necessary to recuperate, and the anxiety for a profitable play, or some other adventure that would bring a quick and generous return, grew out of this need.

Clemens had established Charles L. Webster, his nephew by marriage, in a New York office, as selling agent for the Mississippi book and for his plays. He was also planning to let Webster publish the new book, *Huck Finn*.

George W. Cable had proved his ability as a reader, and Clemens saw possibilities in a reading combination, which was first planned to include Aldrich, and Howells, and a private car. But Aldrich and Howells did not warm to the idea, and the car was eliminated from the plan. Cable came to visit Clemens in Hartford, and was taken with the mumps, so that the reading trip was postponed.

Cable recovered in time, and out of gratitude planned a great April-fool surprise for his host. He was a systematic man, and did it in his usual thorough way. He sent a "private and confidential" suggestion to a hundred and fifty of Mark Twain's friends and admirers, nearly all distinguished literary men. The suggestion was that each one of them should send a request for Mark Twain's autograph, timing it so that it would arrive on the 1st of April. All seemed to have responded. Mark Twain's writing-table on April Fool morning was heaped with letters, asking in every ridiculous fashion for his "valuable autograph." The one from Aldrich was a fair sample. He wrote: "I am making a collection of autographs of our distinguished writers, and having read one of your works, *Gabriel Conroy*, I would like to add your name to the list."

Of course, the joke in this was that *Gabriel Conroy* was by Bret Harte, who by this time was thoroughly detested by Mark Twain. The first one or two of the letters puzzled the victim; then he comprehended the size and character of the joke and entered into it thoroughly. One of the letters was from Blood-good H. Cutter, the "Poet Lariat" of *Innocents Abroad*. Cutter, of course, wrote in "poetry," that is to say, doggerel.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Apl 8, '84.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It took my breath away, and I haven't recovered it yet, entirely—I mean the generosity of your proposal to read the proofs of *Huck Finn*.

Now if you *mean* it, old man—if you are in *earnest*—



MARK TWAIN AND GEORGE W CABLE.



proceed, in God's name, and be by me forever blest. I cannot conceive of a rational man deliberately piling such an atrocious job upon himself; but if there is such a man and you be that man, why then *pile it on*. It will cost me a pang every time I think of it, but this anguish will be eingebusst to me in the joy and comfort I shall get out of the not having to read the verfluchtete proofs myself. But if you have repented of your augenblicklicher Tob-sucht and got back to calm cold reason again, I won't hold you to it unless I find I have got you down in writing somewhere. Herr, I would not read the proof of one of my books for any fair and reasonable sum whatever, if I could get out of it.

The proof-reading on the P & P cost me the last rags of my religion. M.

Howells had written that he would be glad to help out in the reading of the proofs of *Huck Finn*, which book Webster by this time had in hand. Replying to Clemens's eager and grateful acceptance now, he wrote: "It is all perfectly true about the generosity, unless I am going to read your proofs from one of the shabby motives which I always find at the bottom of my soul if I examine it." A characteristic utterance, though we may be permitted to believe that his shabby motives were fewer and less shabby than those of mankind in general.

The proofs which Howells was reading pleased him mightily. Once, during the summer, he wrote: "If I had written half as good a book as *Huck Finn* I shouldn't ask anything better than to read the proofs; even as it is, I don't, so send them on; they will always find me somewhere."

Clemens and Cable set out on their reading-tour in November. They were a curiously-assorted pair. Cable was of orthodox religion, exact as to habits, neat, prim, all that Clemens was not. In the beginning Cable undertook to read the Bible aloud to Clemens each evening, but this part of the day's programme was presently omitted by request. If they spent Sunday in a town, Cable was up bright and early visiting the various churches and Sunday-schools, while Mark Twain remained at the hotel, in bed, reading or asleep.

The year 1885 was in some respects the most important, certainly the most pleasantly exciting, in Mark Twain's life. It was the year in which he entered fully into the publishing

business and launched one of the most spectacular of all publishing adventures, *The Personal Memoirs of General U. S. Grant*. Clemens had not intended to do general publishing when he arranged with Webster to become sales-agent for the Mississippi book, and later general agent for *Huck Finn's* adventures; he had intended only to handle his own books, because he was pretty thoroughly dissatisfied with other publishing arrangements. Even the *Library of Humour*, which Howells, with Clark, of the *Courant*, had put together for him, he left with Osgood until that publisher failed, during the spring of 1885. Certainly he never dreamed of undertaking anything of the proportions of the Grant book.

He had always believed that Grant could make a book. More than once, when they had met, he had urged the General to prepare his memoirs for publication. Howells, in his *My Mark Twain*, tells of going with Clemens to see Grant, then a member of the ill-fated firm of Grant and Ward, and how they lunched on beans, bacon and coffee brought in from a near-by restaurant. It was while they were eating this soldier fare that Clemens—very likely abetted by Howells—especially urged the great commander to prepare his memoirs. But Grant had become a financier, as he believed, and the prospect of literary earnings, however large, did not appeal to him. Furthermore, he was convinced that he was without literary ability and that a book by him would prove a failure.

But then, by and by, came a failure more disastrous than anything he had foreseen—the downfall of his firm through the Napoleonic rascality of Ward. General Grant was utterly ruined; he was left without income and apparently without the means of earning one. It was the period when the great War Series was appearing in the *Century Magazine*. General Grant, hard-pressed, was induced by the editors to prepare one or more articles, and, finding that he could write them, became interested in the idea of a book. It is unnecessary to repeat here the story of how the publication of this important work passed into the hands of Mark Twain; that is to say, the firm of Charles L. Webster & Co.

In the next letter we reach the end of the Clemens-Cable venture and get a characteristic summing up of Mark Twain's general attitude toward the companion of his travels. It must be read only in the clear realization of Mark Twain's attitude toward orthodoxy, and his habit of humour. Cable was as rigidly orthodox as Mark Twain was revolutionary. The two were never anything but the best of friends.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Philada. Feb. 27, '85.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—To-night in Baltimore, to-morrow afternoon and night in Washington, and my four-months platform campaign is ended at last. It has been a curious experience. It has taught me that Cable's gifts of mind are greater and higher than I had suspected. But—

That "But" is pointing toward his religion. You will never, never know, never divine, guess, imagine, how loathsome a thing the Christian religion can be made until you come to know and study Cable daily and hourly. Mind you, I like him ; he is pleasant company ; I rage and swear at him sometimes, but we do not quarrel ; we get along mighty happily together ; but in him and his person I have learned to hate all religions. He has taught me to abhor and detest the Sabbath-day and hunt up new and troublesome ways to dishonor it.

Nat Goodwin was on the train yesterday. He plays in Washington all the coming week. He is very anxious to get our Sellers play and play it under changed names. I said the only thing I could do would be to write to you. Well, I've done it. Ys Ever MARK.

Something has been mentioned before of Mark Twain's investments and the generally unprofitable habit of them. He had a trusting nature, and was usually willing to invest money on any plausible recommendation. He was one of thousands such, and being a person of distinction he now and then received letters of inquiry, complaint, or condolence. A minister wrote him that he had bought some stocks recommended by a Hartford banker and advertised in a religious paper. He added, "After I made that purchase they wrote me that you had just bought a hundred shares and that you were a 'shrewd' man." The writer closed by asking for further information. He received it, as follows :

*To the Rev. J—, in Baltimore :*

Washington, Mch. 2, '85.

MY DEAR SIR,—I take my earliest opportunity to answer your favor of Feb. 23.

B— was premature in calling me a “shrewd man.” I wasn’t one at that time, but am one now—that is, I am at least too shrewd to ever again invest in anything put on the market by B—. I know nothing whatever about the Bank Note Co., and never did know anything about it. B— sold me about \$4,000 or \$5,000 worth of the stock at \$110, and I own it yet. He sold me \$10,000 worth of another rose-tinted stock about the same time. I have got that yet, also. I judge that a peculiarity of B—’s stocks is that they are of the staying kind. I think you should have asked somebody else whether I was a shrewd man or not—for two reasons: the stock was advertised in a religious paper, a circumstance which was very suspicious; and the compliment came to you from a man who was interested to make a purchaser of you. I am afraid you deserve your loss. A financial scheme advertised in any religious paper is a thing which any living person ought to know enough to avoid; and when the factor is added that M. runs that religious paper, a dead person ought to know enough to avoid it.

Very Truly Yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

The story of *Huck Finn* was having a wide success. Webster handled it skilfully, and the sales were large. In almost every quarter its welcome was enthusiastic. Here and there, however, could be found an exception; Huck’s morals were not always approved of by library reading-committees. The first instance of this kind was reported from Concord, and would seem not to have depressed the author-publisher.

*To Chas. L. Webster, in New York:*

Me<sup>h</sup> 18, ’85.

DEAR CHARLEY,—The Committee of the Public Library of Concord, Mass, have given us a rattling tip-top puff which will go into every paper in the country. They have expelled Huck from their library as “trash and suitable



only for the slums." That will sell 25,000 copies for us sure.

Ys

S. L. C.

Perhaps the Concord Free Trade Club had some idea of making amends to Mark Twain for the slight put upon his book by their librarians, for immediately after the *Huck Finn* incident they notified him of his election to honorary membership.

Those were the days of "authors' readings," and Clemens and Howells not infrequently assisted at these functions, usually given as benefits of one kind or another. From the next letter, written following an entertainment given for the Longfellow memorial, we gather that Mark Twain's opinion of Howells's reading was steadily improving.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, May 5, '85.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—. . . Who taught you to read ? Observation and thought, I guess. And practice at the Tavern Club ?—yes ; and that was the best teaching of all.

Well, you sent even your daintiest and most delicate and fleeting points home to that audience—absolute *proof* of good reading. But you couldn't read worth a damn a few years ago. I do not say this to flatter. It is true I looked around for you when I was leaving, but you had already gone.

Alas, Osgood has failed at last. It was easy to see that he was on the very verge of it a year ago, and it was also easy to see that he was still on the verge of it a month or two ago ; but I continued to hope—but not expect—that he would pull through. The Library of Humor is at his dwelling house, and he will hand it to you whenever you want it.

To save it from any possibility of getting mixed up in the failure, perhaps you had better send down and get it. I told him, the other day, that an order of any kind from you would be his sufficient warrant for its delivery to you.

In two days General Grant has dictated 50 pages of

foolscap, and thus the Wilderness and Appomattox stand for all time in his own words. This makes the second volume of his book as valuable as the first.

He looks mighty well, these latter days.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmura, July 21, 1885.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—You are really my only author ; I am restricted to you, I wouldn't give a damn for the rest.

I bored through Middlemarch during the past week, with its labored and tedious analyses of feelings and motives, its paltry and tiresome people, its unexciting and uninteresting story, and its frequent blinding flashes of single-sentence poetry, philosophy, wit, and what not, and nearly died from the overwork. I wouldn't read another of those books for a farm. I did try to read one other—Daniel Deronda. I dragged through three chapters, losing flesh all the time, and then was honest enough to quit, and confess to myself that I haven't any romance literature appetite, as far as I can see, except for your books.

But what I started to say, was, that I have just read Part II of Indian Summer, and to my mind there isn't a waste line in it, or one that could be improved. I read it yesterday, ending with that opinion ; and read it again to-day, ending with the same opinion emphasized. I haven't read Part I yet, because that number must have reached Hartford after we left ; but we are going to send down town for a copy, and when it comes I am to read both parts aloud to the family. It is a beautiful story, and makes a body laugh all the time, and cry inside, and feel so old and so forlorn ; and gives him gracious glimpses of his lost youth that fill him with a measureless regret, and build up in him a cloudy sense of his having been a prince,

once, in some enchanted far-off land, and of being an exile now, and desolate—and Lord, no chance ever to get back there again ! That is the thing that hurts. Well, you have done it with marvelous facility and you make all the motives and feelings perfectly clear without analyzing the guts out of them, the way George Eliot does. I can't stand George Eliot and Hawthorne and those people ; I see what they are at a hundred years before they get to it and they just tire me to death. And as for "The Bostonians," I would rather be damned to John Bunyan's heaven than read that.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

It is as easy to understand Mark Twain's enjoyment of *Indian Summer* as his revolt against *Daniel Deronda* and *The Bostonians*. He cared little for writing that did not convey its purpose in the simplest and most direct terms. It is interesting to note that in thanking Clemens for his compliment Howells wrote : " What people cannot see is that I analyze as little as possible ; they go on talking about the analytical school, which I am supposed to belong to, and I want to thank you for using your eyes. . . . Did you ever read Defoe's *Roxana* ? If not, then read it, not merely for some of the deepest insights into the lying, suffering, sinning, well-meaning human soul, but for the best and most natural English that a book was ever written in."

General Grant worked steadily on his book, dictating when he could, making brief notes on slips of paper when he could no longer speak. Clemens visited him at Mt. McGregor and brought the dying soldier the comforting news that enough of his books were already sold to provide generously for his family, and that the sales would aggregate at least twice as much by the end of the year. This was some time in July. On the 23rd of that month General Grant died.

General Grant's early indulgence in liquors had long been a matter of wide, though not very definite, knowledge. Every one had heard how Lincoln, on being told that Grant drank, remarked something to the effect that he would like to know what kind of whisky Grant used so that he might get some of it for his other generals. Henry Ward Beecher, selected to deliver a eulogy on the dead soldier, and doubtless wishing neither to

ignore the matter nor to make too much of it, naturally turned for information to the publisher of Grant's own memoirs, hoping from an advance copy to obtain light.

*To Henry Ward Beecher, Brooklyn :*

Elmira, N. Y. Sept. 11, '85.

MY DEAR MR. BEECHER,—My nephew Webster is in Europe making contracts for the Memoirs. Before he sailed he came to me with a writing, directed to the printers and binders, to this effect :

“Honor no order for a sight or copy of the Memoirs while I am absent, even though it be signed by Mr. Clemens himself.”

I gave my permission. There were weighty reasons why I should not only give my permission, but hold it a matter of honor to not dissolve the order or modify it at any time. So I did all of that—said the order should stand undisturbed to the end. If a principal could dissolve his promise as innocently as he can dissolve his written order unguarded by his promise, I would send you a copy of the Memoirs instantly. I did not foresee *you*, or I would have made an exception.

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My idea gained from army men, is that the drunkenness (and sometimes pretty reckless spreeing, nights,) ceased before he came East to be Lt. General. (Refer especially to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin.<sup>1</sup>) It was while Grant was still in the West that Mr. Lincoln said he wished he could find out what brand of whisky that fellow used, so he could furnish it to some of the other generals. Franklin *saw* Grant tumble from his horse drunk, while reviewing troops in New Orleans. The fall gave him a good deal of a hurt. He was then on the point of leaving for the Chattanooga region. I naturally put “that and that together” when I read Gen. O. O. Howard's article in

<sup>1</sup> If you could see Franklin and *talk* with him—then he would unbosom.

the Christian Union, three or four weeks ago—where he mentions that the new General arrived lame from a recent accident. (See that article.) And why not write Howard ?

Franklin spoke positively of the frequent spreeing. In camp—in time of war.

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Captain Grant was frequently threatened by the Commandant of his Oregon post with a report to the War Department of his conduct unless he modified his intemperance. The report would mean dismissal from the service. At last the report *had* to be made out ; and then, so greatly was the captain beloved, that he was privately informed, and was thus enabled to rush his resignation to Washington ahead of the report. Did the report *go*, nevertheless ? I don't know. If it did, it is in the War Department now, possibly, and seeable. I got all this from a regular army man, but I can't name him to save me.

The only time General Grant ever mentioned liquor to me was about last April or possibly May. He said :

“ If I could only build up my strength ! The doctors urge whisky and champagne ; but I can't take them ; I can't abide the taste of any kind of liquor.”

Had he made a conquest so complete that even the *taste* of liquor was become an offense ? Or was he so sore over what had been said about his habit that he wanted to persuade others and likewise himself that he hadn't even ever *had* any taste for it ? It *sounded* like the latter, but that's no evidence.

He told me in the fall of '84 that there was something the matter with his throat, and that at the suggestion of his physicians he had reduced his smoking to one cigar a day. Then he added, in a casual fashion, that he didn't care for *that* one, and seldom smoked it.

I could understand that feeling. He had set out to conquer not the *habit* but the *inclination*—the *desire*.

He had gone at the root, not the trunk. It's the *perfect* way and the only true way (I speak from experience.) How I do hate those enemies of the human race who go around enslaving God's free people with *pledges*—to quit drinking instead of to quit wanting to drink.

But Sherman and Van Vliet know *everything* concerning Grant; and if you tell them how you want to use the facts, both of them will testify. Regular army men have no concealments about each other; and yet they make their awful statements without shade or color or malice—with a frankness and a child-like naivety, indeed, which is enchanting—and stupefying. West Point seems to teach them that, among other priceless things not to be got in any other college in this world. If we talked about our guild-mates as I have heard Sherman, Grant, Van Vliet and others talk about theirs—mates with whom they were on the best possible terms—we could never expect them to speak to us again.

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I am reminded, now, of another matter. The day of the funeral I sat an hour over a single drink and several cigars with Van Vliet and Sherman and Senator Sherman; and among other things Gen. Sherman said, with impatient scorn:

"The idea of all this nonsense about Grant not being able to stand rude language and indelicate stories! Why Grant was *full* of humor, and full of the appreciation of it. I have sat with him by the hour listening to Jim Nye's yarns, and I reckon you know the style of Jim Nye's histories, Clemens. It makes me sick—that newspaper nonsense. Grant was no namby-pamby fool, he was a *man*—all over—rounded and complete."

I wish I had thought of it! I would have said to General Grant: "Put the drunkenness in the Memoirs—and the repentance and reform. Trust the people."

But I will wager there is not a hint in the book. He was sore, there. As much of the book as I have read gives no hint, as far as I recollect.

The sick-room brought out the points of Gen. Grant's character—some of them particularly, to wit :

His patience ; his indestructible equability of temper ; his exceeding gentleness, kindness, forbearance, lovingness, charity ; his *loyalty* : to friends, to convictions, to promises, half-promises, infinitesimal fractions and shadows of promises ; (There was a requirement of him which I considered an atrocity, an injustice, an outrage ; I wanted to implore him to repudiate it ; Fred Grant said, " Save your labor, I *know* him ; he is in doubt as to whether he made that half-promise or not—and he will give the thing the benefit of the doubt ; he will fulfil that half-promise or kill himself trying ;" Fred Grant was right—he *did* fulfil it ;) his aggravatingly trustful nature ; his genuineness, simplicity, modesty, diffidence, self-depreciation, poverty in the quality of vanity—and, in no contradiction of this last, his simple pleasure in the flowers and general ruck sent to him by Tom, Dick and Harry from everywhere—a pleasure that suggested a perennial surprise that he should be the object of so much fine attention—he *was* the most lovable great child in the world ; (I mentioned his loyalty ; you remember Harrison, the colored body-servant ? the whole family hated him, but that did not make any difference, the General always stood at his back, wouldn't allow him to be scolded ; always excused his failures and deficiencies with the one unvarying formula, " We are responsible for these things in his race—it is not fair to visit our fault upon them—let him *alone* ;" so they did let him alone, under compulsion, until the great heart that was his shield was taken away ; then—well they simply couldn't *stand* him, and so they were excusable for determining to discharge him—a thing which they mortally hated to do, and by lucky accident were saved from the necessity of doing ;) his toughness as a bargainer when doing business for other people or for his country (witness his " terms " at Donelson, Vicksburg, etc. ; Fred Grant told me his father

wound up an estate for the widow and orphans of a friend in St. Louis—it took several years ; at the end every complication had been straightened out, and the property put upon a prosperous basis ; great sums had passed through his hands, and when he handed over the papers there were vouchers to show what had been done with every penny) and his trusting, easy, unexacting fashion when doing business for himself (at that same time he was paying out money in dribblets to a man who was running his farm for him—and in his first Presidency he paid every one of those dribblets again (total, \$3,000 F. said,) for he hadn't a scrap of paper to show that he had ever paid them before ; in his dealings with me he would *not* listen to terms which would place my money at risk and leave him protected—the thought plainly gave him *pain*, and he put it from him, waved it off with his *hands*, as one does accounts of crushings and mutilations—wouldn't listen, changed the subject ;) and his fortitude ! He was under sentence of death last spring ; he sat thinking, musing, several days—nobody knows what about ; then he pulled himself together and set to work to finish that book, a colossal task for a dying man. Presently his hand gave out ; fate seemed to have got him checkmated. Dictation was suggested. No, he never could do that ; had never tried it ; too old to learn, now. By and by—if he could only do Appomattox—well. So he sent for a stenographer, and dictated 9,000 words at a single sitting !—never pausing, never hesitating for a word, never repeating—and in the written-out copy he made hardly a correction. He dictated again, every two or three days—the intervals were intervals of exhaustion and slow recuperation—and at last he was able to tell me that he had written more matter than could be got into the book. I then enlarged the book—had to. Then he lost his voice. He was not quite done yet, however :—there was no end of little plums and spices to be stuck in, here and there ; and this work he patiently continued, a few lines a day,



with pad and pencil, till far into July, at Mt. McGregor. One day he put his pencil aside, and said he was done—there was nothing more to do. If I had been there I could have foretold the shock that struck the world three days later.

Well, I've written all this, and it doesn't seem to amount to anything. But I do want to help, if I only could. I will enclose some scraps from my Autobiography—scraps about General Grant—they may be of some trifle of use, and they may not—they at least verify known traits of his character. My Autobiography is pretty freely dictated, but my idea is to jack-plane it a little before I die, some day or other; I mean the rude construction and rotten grammar. It is the only dictating I ever did, and it was most troublesome and awkward work. You may return it to Hartford.

Sincerely Yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

The old long-deferred *Library of Humour* came up again for discussion, when in the fall of 1885 Howells associated himself with Harper & Brothers. Howells's contract provided that his name was not to appear on any book not published by the Harper firm. He wrote, therefore, offering to sell out his interest in the enterprise for two thousand dollars, in addition to the five hundred which he had already received—an amount considered to be less than he was to have received as joint author and compiler. Mark Twain's answer pretty fully covers the details of this undertaking.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Oct. 18, 1885.

Private.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I reckon it would ruin the book—that is, make it necessary to pigeon-hole it and leave it unpublished. I couldn't publish it without a very responsible name to support my own on the title page, because it has so much of my own matter in it. I bought

Osgood's rights for \$3,000 cash, I have paid Clark \$500 and owe him \$700 more, which must of course be paid whether I publish or not. Yet I fully recognize that I have no sort of moral right to let that ancient and procrastinated contract hamper you in any way, and I most certainly won't. So, it is my decision,—after thinking over and rejecting the idea of trying to buy permission of the Harpers for \$2,500 to use your name, (a proposition which they would hate to refuse to a man in a perplexed position, and yet would naturally have to refuse it,) to pigeon-hole the "Library": not destroy it, but merely pigeon-hole it and wait a few years and see what new notion Providence will take concerning it. He will not desert us now, after putting in four licks to our one on this book all this time. It really seems in a sense discourteous not to call it "Providence's Library of Humor."

Now that deal is all settled, the next question is, do you need and must you require that \$2,000 now? Since last March, you know, I am carrying a mighty load, solitary and alone—General Grant's book—and must carry it till the first volume is 30 days old (Jan. 1st) before the relief money will begin to flow in. From now till the first of January every dollar is as valuable to me as it could be to a famishing tramp. If you can wait till then—I mean without discomfort, without inconvenience—it will be a large accommodation to me; but I will not allow you to do this favor if it will discommode you. So, speak right out, frankly, and if you need the money I will go out on the highway and get it, using violence, if necessary.

Mind, I am not in financial difficulties, and am not going to be. I am merely a starving beggar standing outside the door of plenty—obstructed by a Yale time-lock which is set for Jan. 1st. I can stand it, and stand it perfectly well; but the days do seem to fool along considerable slower than they used to.

I am mighty glad you are with the Harpers. I have noticed that good men in their employ go there to stay.

Yours ever,

MARK.

In the next letter we begin to get some idea of the size of Mark Twain's first publishing venture, and a brief summary of results may not be out of place here.

The *Grant Life* was issued in two volumes. In the early months of the year when the agents' canvass was just beginning, Mark Twain, with what seems now almost clairvoyant vision, prophesied a sale of three hundred thousand sets. The actual sales ran somewhat more than this number. On February 27, 1886, Charles L. Webster & Co. paid to Mrs. Grant the largest single royalty cheque in the history of book-publishing. The amount of it was two hundred thousand dollars. Subsequent cheques increased the aggregate return to considerably more than double this figure. In a memorandum made by Clemens in the midst of the canvass he wrote:

"During 100 consecutive days the sales (*i.e.*, subscriptions) of General Grant's book averaged 3,000 sets (6,000 single volumes) per day. Roughly stated, Mrs. Grant's income during all that time was \$5,000 a day."

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hotel Normandie

New York, Dec 2, '85.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I told Webster, this afternoon, to send you that \$2,000; but he is in such a rush, these first days of publication, that he may possibly forget it; so I write lest I forget it too. Remind me, if he should forget. When I postponed you lately, I did it because I thought I should be cramped for money until January, but that has turned out to be an error, so I hasten to cut short the postponement.

I judge by the newspapers that you are in Auburndale, but I don't know it officially.

I've got the first volume launched safely; consequently half of the suspense is over, and I am that much nearer the goal. We've bound and shipped 200,000 books; and by the 10th shall finish and ship the remaining 125,000 of the first edition. I got nervous and came down to

help hump-up the binderies; and I mean to stay here pretty much all the time till the first days of March, when the second volume will issue. Shan't have so much trouble, this time, though, if we get to press pretty soon, because we can get more binderies then than are to be had in front of the holidays. One lives and learns. I find it takes 7 binderies four months to bind 325,000 books.

This is a good book to publish. I heard a canvasser say, yesterday, that while delivering eleven books he took 7 new subscriptions. But we shall be in a hell of a fix if that goes on—it will “ball up” the binderies again.

Yrs ever

MARK.

November 30th that year was Mark Twain's fiftieth birthday, an event noticed by the newspapers generally, and especially observed by many of his friends. Warner, Stockton and many others sent letters; Andrew Lang contributed a fine poem; also Oliver Wendell Holmes—the latter by special request of Miss Gilder—for the *Critic*. These attentions came as a sort of crowning happiness at the end of a golden year. At no time in his life were Mark Twain's fortunes and prospects brighter; he had a beautiful family and a perfect home. Also, he had great prosperity. The reading-tour with Cable had been a fine success. His latest book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, had added largely to his fame and income. The publication of the *Grant Memoirs* had been a dazzling triumph. Mark Twain had become recognized, not only as America's most distinguished author, but as its most envied publisher.

Jane Clemens now lived with her son Orion and his wife, in Keokuk, where she was more contented than elsewhere. In these later days her memory had become erratic, her realization of events about her uncertain, but there were times when she was quite her former self, remembering clearly and talking with her old-time gaiety of spirit. Mark Twain frequently sent her playful letters to amuse her, letters full of such boyish gaiety as had amused her long years before.

*To Jane Clemens, in Keokuk :*

Elmira, Aug. 7, '86.

DEAR MA,—I heard that Molly and Orion and Pamela had been sick, but I see by your letter that they are much

better now, or nearly well. When we visited you a month ago, it seemed to us that your Keokuk weather was pretty hot; Jean and Clara sat up in bed at Mrs. McElroy's and cried about it, and so did I; but I judge by your letter that it has cooled down, now, so that a person is comparatively comfortable, with his skin off. Well it did need cooling; I remember that I burnt a hole in my shirt, there, with some ice cream that fell on it; and Miss Jenkins told me they never used a stove, but cooked their meals on a marble-topped table in the drawing-room, just with the natural heat. If anybody else had told me, I would not have believed it. I was told by the Bishop of Keokuk that he did not allow crying at funerals, because it scalded the furniture. If Miss Jenkins had told me that, I would have believed it. This reminds me that you speak of Dr. Jenkins and his family as if they were strangers to me. Indeed they are not. Don't you suppose I remember gratefully how tender the doctor was with Jean when she hurt her arm, and how quickly he got the pain out of the hurt, whereas I supposed it was going to last at least an hour? No, I don't forget some things as easily as I do others.

Yes, it was pretty hot weather. Now here, when a person is going to die, he is always in a sweat about where he is going to; but in Keokuk of course they don't care, because they are fixed for everything. It has set me reflecting, it has taught me a lesson. By and by, when my health fails, I am going to put all my affairs in order, and bid good-bye to my friends here, and kill all the people I don't like, and go out to Keokuk and prepare for death.

They are all well in this family, and we all send love.

Affly Your Son

SAM.

The ways of city officials and corporations are often past understanding, and Mark Twain sometimes found it necessary to write picturesque letters of protest.

*To a gas and electric-lighting company, in Hartford :*

GENTLEMEN.—There are but two places in our whole street where lights could be of any value, by any accident, and you have measured and appointed your intervals so ingeniously as to leave each of those places in the centre of a couple of hundred yards of solid darkness. When I noticed that you were setting one of your lights in such a way that I could almost see how to get into my gate at night, I suspected that it was a piece of carelessness on the part of the workmen, and would be corrected as soon as you should go around inspecting and find it out. My judgment was right ; it is always right, when you are concerned. For fifteen years, in spite of my prayers and tears, you persistently kept a gas lamp exactly half way between my gates, so that I couldn't find either of them after dark ; and then furnished such execrable gas that I had to hang a danger signal on the lamp post to keep teams from running into it, nights. Now I suppose your present idea is, to leave us a little more in the dark.

Don't mind us—out our way ; we possess but one vote apiece, and no rights which you are in any way bound to respect. Please take your electric light and go to—but never mind, it is not for me to suggest ; you will probably find the way ; and any way you can reasonably count on divine assistance if you lose your bearings.

S. L. CLEMENS.

Frequently Clemens did not send letters of this sort after they were written. Sometimes he realized the uselessness of such protest, sometimes the mere writing of them had furnished the necessary relief, and he put the letter away, or into the wastebasket, and wrote something more temperate, or nothing at all.

Clemens was all the time receiving applications from people who wished him to recommend one article or another ; books, plays, tobacco, and what not. The manager of a travelling theatrical company wrote that he had taken the liberty of dramatizing *Tom Sawyer*, and would like also the use of the author's name—the idea being to convey to the public that it

was a Mark Twain play. In return for this slight favour the manager sent an invitation for Mark Twain to come and see the play—to be present on the opening night, as it were, at his (the manager's) expense. He added that if the play should be a go in the cities there might be some "arrangement" of profits.

*Unmailed Answer :*

Hartford, Sept. 8, '87.

DEAR SIR,—And so it has got around to you, at last; and you also have "taken the liberty." You are No. 1365. When 1364 sweeter and better people, including the author, have "tried" to dramatize Tom Sawyer and did not arrive, what sort of show do you suppose you stand? That is a book, dear sir, which cannot be dramatized. One might as well try to dramatize any other hymn Tom Sawyer is simply a hymn, put into prose form to give it a worldly air.

Why the pale doubt that flitteth dim and nebulous athwart the forecastle of your third sentence? Have no fears. Your piece will be a Go. It will go out the back door on the first night. They've all done it—the 1364. So will—1365. Not one of us ever thought of the simple device of half-soling himself with a stove-lid. Ah, what suffering a little hindsight would have saved us. Treasure this hint.

How kind of you to invite me to the funeral. Go to; I have attended a thousand of them. I have seen Tom Sawyer's remains in all the different kinds of dramatic shrouds there are. You cannot start anything fresh. Are you serious when you propose to pay my expence—if that is the Susquehannian way of spelling it? And can you be aware that I charge a hundred dollars a mile when I travel for pleasure? Do you realize that it is 432 miles to Susquehanna? Would it be handy for you to send me the \$43,200 first, so I could be counting it as I come along; because railroading is pretty dreary to a sensitive

nature when there's nothing sordid to buck at for Zeitvertreib.

Now as I understand it, dear and magnanimous 1865, you are going to re-create Tom Sawyer dramatically, and then do me the compliment to put me in the bills as father of this shady offspring. Sir, do you know that this kind of a compliment has destroyed people before now? Listen.

Twenty-four years ago, I was strangely handsome. The remains of it are still visible through the rifts of time. I was so handsome that human activities ceased as if spell-bound when I came in view, and even inanimate things stopped to look—like locomotives, and district messenger boys and so-on. In San Francisco, in the rainy season I was often mistaken for fair weather. Upon one occasion I was traveling in the Sonora region, and stopped for an hour's nooning, to rest my horse and myself. All the town came out to look. The tribes of Indians gathered to look. A Piute squaw named her baby for me,—a voluntary compliment which pleased me greatly. Other attentions were paid me. Last of all arrived the president and faculty of Sonora University and offered me the post of Professor of Moral Culture and the Dogmatic Humanities; which I accepted gratefully, and entered at once upon my duties. But my name had pleased the Indians, and in the deadly kindness of their hearts they went on naming their babies after me. I tried to stop it, but the Indians could not understand why I should object to so manifest a compliment. The thing grew and grew and spread and spread and became exceedingly embarrassing. The University stood it a couple of years; but then for the sake of the college they felt obliged to call a halt, although I had the sympathy of the whole faculty. The president himself said to me, "I am as sorry as I can be for you, and would still hold out if there were any hope ahead; but you see how it is: there are a hundred and thirty-two of them already, and fourteen precincts to hear from. The circumstance has brought your name into most wide and



unfortunate renown. It causes much comment—I believe that that is not an over-statement. Some of this comment is palliative, but some of it—by patrons at a distance, who only know the statistics without the explanation,—is offensive, and in some cases even violent. Nine students have been called home. The trustees of the college have been growing more and more uneasy all these last months—steadily along with the implacable increase in your census—and I will not conceal from you that more than once they have touched upon the expediency of a change in the Professorship of Moral Culture. The coarsely sarcastic editorial in yesterday's *Alta*,—headed *Give the Moral Acrobat a Rest*—has brought things to a crisis, and I am charged with the unpleasant duty of receiving your resignation."

I know you only mean me a kindness, dear 1865, but it is a most deadly mistake. Please do not name your Injun for me. Truly Yours.

*Mailed Answer :*

New York, Sept. 8 1887.

DEAR SIR,—Necessarily I cannot assent to so strange a proposition. And I think it but fair to warn you that if you put the piece on the stage, you must take the legal consequences.

Yours respectfully,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Before the days of international copyright no American author's books were pirated more freely by Canadian publishers than those of Mark Twain. It was always a sore point with him that these books, cheaply printed, found their way into the United States, and were sold in competition with his better editions.

*Unmailed Letter to H. C. Christianity, on book Piracy :*

Hartford, Dec. 18, '87.

H. C. CHRISTIANCY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,—As I understand it, the position of the U. S. Government is this: If a person be captured on

the border with counterfeit bonds in his hands—bonds of the N. Y. Central Railway, for instance—the procedure in his case shall be as follows :

1. If the N. Y. C. have not previously filed in the several police offices along the border, proof of ownership of the originals of the bonds, the government officials must collect a *duty* on the counterfeits, and then let them go ahead and circulate in this country.

2. But if there *is* proof already on file, then the N. Y. C. may pay the duty and take the counterfeits.

But in no case will the United States consent to go without its share of the swag. It is delicious. The biggest and proudest government on earth turned sneak-thief ; collecting pennies on stolen property, and pocketing them with a greasy and libidinous leer ; going into partnership with foreign thieves to rob its own children ; and when the child escapes the foreigner, descending to the abysmal baseness of hanging on and robbing the infant all alone by itself ! Dear sir, this is not any more respectable than for a father to collect toll on the forced prostitution of his own daughter ; in fact it is the same thing. Upon these terms, what is a U. S. custom house but a “ fence ? ” That is all it is : a legalized trader in stolen goods.

And this nasty law, this filthy law, this unspeakable law calls itself a “ regulation for the protection of owners of copyright ! ” Can sarcasm go further than that ? In what way does it protect them ? Inspiration itself could not furnish a rational answer to that question. Whom does it protect, then ? Nobody, as far as I can see, but the foreign thief—sometimes—and his fellow-footpad the U. S. Government, all the time. What could the Central Company do with the counterfeit bonds after it had bought them of the star spangled banner Master-thief ? Sell them at a dollar apiece and fetch down the market for the genuine hundred-dollar bond ? What could I do with that 20-cent copy of “ Roughing It ” which the United States has collared on the border and is waiting to release

to me for cash in case I am willing to come down to its moral level and help rob myself? Sell it at ten or fifteen cents—duty added—and destroy the market for the original \$3,50 book? Who ever did invent that law? I would like to know the name of that immortal jackass.

Dear sir, I appreciate your courtesy in stretching your authority in the desire to do me a kindness, and I sincerely thank you for it. But I have no use for that book; and if I were even starving for it I would not pay duty on in either to get it or suppress it. No doubt there are ways in which I might consent to go into partnership with thieves and fences, but this is not one of them. This one revolts the remains of my self-respect; turns my stomach. I think I could companion with a highwayman who carried a shot-gun and took many risks; yes, I think I should like that if I were younger; but to go in with a big rich government that robs paupers, and the widows and orphans of paupers and takes no risk—why the thought just gags me.

Oh, no, I shall never pay any duties on pirated books of mine. I am much too respectable for that—yet awhile. But here—one thing that grovels me is this: as far as I can discover—while freely granting that the U. S. copyright laws are far and away the most idiotic that exist anywhere on the face of the earth—they don't authorize the government to admit pirated books into this country, toll or no toll. And so I think that that regulation is the invention of one of those people—as a rule, early stricken of God, intellectually—the departmental *interpreters* of the laws, in Washington. They can always be depended on to take any reasonably good law and interpret the common sense all out of it. They can be depended on, every time, to defeat a good law, and make it inoperative—yes, and utterly grotesque, too, mere matter for laughter and derision. Take some of the decisions of the Post-office Department, for instance—though I do not mean to suggest that that asylum is any worse than the others for

the breeding and nourishing of incredible lunatics—I merely instance it because it happens to be the first to come into my mind. Take that case of a few years ago where the P. M. General suddenly issued an edict requiring you to add the name of the *State* after Boston, New York, Chicago, &c, in your superscriptions, on pain of having your letter stopped and forwarded to the dead-letter office; yes, and I believe he required the county, too. He made one little concession in favor of New York: you could say “New York *City*,” and stop there; but if you left off the “city,” you must add “N. Y.” to your “New York.” Why, it threw the business of the whole country into chaos and brought commerce almost to a stand-still. Now think of that! When that man goes to—to—well, wherever he is going to—we shan’t want the microscopic details of his address. I guess we can find him.

Well, as I was saying, *I* believe that this whole paltry and ridiculous swindle is a pure creation of one of those cabbages that used to be at the head of one of those Retreats down there—Departments you know—and that you will find it so, if you will look into it. And moreover—but land, I reckon we are both tired by this time.

Truly Yours,

MARK TWAIN.

*To Mrs. T.—Concerning unearned credentials, etc.*

Hartford, 1887.

MY DEAR MADAM,—It is an idea which many people have had, but it is of no value. I have seen it tried out many and many a time. I have seen a lady lecturer urged and urged upon the public in a lavishly complimentary document signed by Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes and some others of supreme celebrity, but—there was nothing in her and she failed. If there had been any great merit in her she never would have needed those men’s help and (at her rather mature age,) would never have consented to ask for it.

There is an unwritten law about human successes, and your sister must bow to that law, she must submit to its requirements. In brief this law is :

1. No occupation without an apprenticeship.
2. No pay to the apprentice.

This law stands right in the way of the subaltern who wants to be a General before he has smelt powder ; and it stands (and should stand) in everybody's way who applies for pay or position before he has served his apprenticeship and *proved* himself. Your sister's course is perfectly plain. Let her enclose this letter to Maj. J. B. Pond, and offer to lecture a year for \$10 a week and her expenses, the contract to be annulable by him at any time, after a month's notice, but not annulable by her at all. The second year, he to have her services, if he wants them, at a trifle under the best price offered her by anybody else.

She can learn her trade in those two years, and then be entitled to remuneration—but she can not learn it in any less time than that, unless she is a human miracle.

Try it, and do not be afraid. It is the fair and right thing. If she wins, she will win squarely and righteously, and never have to blush.

Truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Jeanette Gilder, then of the *Critic*, was one of Mark Twain's valued friends. In the comment which he made, when it was shown to him twenty-two years later, he tells us why he thinks this letter was not sent. The name, "Rest-and-be-Thankful," was the official title given to the summer place at Elmira, but it was more often known as "Quarry Farm."

*To Jeannette Gilder (not mailed) :*

Hartford, May 14, '87.

MY DEAR MISS GILDER,—We shall spend the summer at the same old place—the remote farm called "Rest-and-be-Thankful," on top of the hills three miles from Elmira,

N. Y. Your other question is harder to answer. It is my habit to keep four or five books in process of erection all the time, and every summer add a few courses of bricks to two or three of them ; but I cannot forecast which of the two or three it is going to be. It takes seven years to complete a book by this method, but still it is a good method : gives the public a rest. I have been accused of "rushing into print" prematurely, moved thereto by greediness for money ; but in truth I have never done that. Do you care for trifles of information ? Well, then, "Tom Sawyer" and "The Prince and the Pauper" were each on the stocks two or three years, and "Old Times on the Mississippi" eight. One of my unfinished books has been on the stocks sixteen years ; another seventeen. This latter book could have been finished in a day, at any rate during the past five years. But as in the first of these two narratives all the action takes place in Noah's ark, and as in the other the action takes place in heaven, there seemed to be no hurry, and so I have not hurried. Tales of stirring adventure in those localities do not need to be rushed to publication lest they get stale by waiting. In twenty-one years, with all my time at my free disposal I have written and completed only eleven books, whereas with half the labor that a journalist does I could have written sixty in that time. I do not greatly mind being accused of a proclivity for rushing into print, but at the same time I don't believe that the charge is really well founded. Suppose I did write eleven books, have you nothing to be grateful for ? Go to—remember the forty-nine which I didn't write.

Truly Yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

*Notes (added twenty-two years later) :*

Stormfield, April 30, 1909. It seems the letter was not sent. I probably feared she might print it, and I couldn't

find a way to say so without running a risk of hurting her. No one would hurt Jeannette Gilder purposely, and no one would want to run the risk of doing it unintentionally. She is my neighbor, six miles away, now, and I must ask her about this ancient letter.

I note with pride and pleasure that I told no untruths in my unsent answer. I still have the habit of keeping unfinished books lying around years and years, waiting. I have four or five novels on hand at present in a half-finished condition, and it is more than three years since I have looked at any of them. I have no intention of finishing them. I could complete all of them in less than a year, if the impulse should come powerfully upon me. Long, long ago money-*necessity* furnished that impulse once, ("Following the Equator"), but mere desire for money has never furnished it, so far as I remember. Not even money-*necessity* was able to overcome me on a couple of occasions when perhaps I ought to have allowed it to succeed. While I was a bankrupt and in debt two offers were made me for weekly literary contributions to continue during a year, and they would have made a debtless man of me, but I declined them, with my wife's full approval, for I had known of no instance where a man had pumped himself out once a week and failed to run "emptyings" before the year was finished.

As to that "Noah's Ark" book, I began it in Edinburgh in 1873; I don't know where the manuscript is now. It was a Diary, which professed to be the work of Shem, but wasn't. I began it again several months ago, but only for recreation; I hadn't any intention of carrying it to a finish—or even to the end of the first chapter, in fact.

As to the book whose action "takes place in Heaven." That was a small thing, ("Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven.") It lay in my pigeon-holes 40 years, then I took it out and printed it in Harper's Monthly last year.

S. L. C.

Mark Twain had a few books that he read regularly every year or two. Among these were *Pepys's Diary*, Suetonius's *Lives of the Twelve Cæsars*, and Thomas Carlyle's *French Revolution*. He had a passion for history, biography, and personal memoirs of any sort. In his early life he had cared very little for poetry, but along in the middle eighties he somehow acquired a taste for Browning and became absorbed in it. A Browning club assembled as often as once a week at the Clemens home in Hartford to listen to his readings of the master. He was an impressive reader, and he carefully prepared himself for these occasions, indicating by graduated underscorings the exact values he wished to give to word and phrases.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Elmira, Aug. 22, '87.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—How stunning are the changes which age makes in a man while he sleeps. When I finished Carlyle's *French Revolution* in 1871, I was a Girondin; every time I have read it since, I have read it differently—being influenced and changed, little by little, by life and environment (and Taine and St. Simon) : and now I lay the book down once more, and recognize that I am a Sansculotte!—And not a pale, characterless Sansculotte, but a Marat. Carlyle teaches no such gospel : so the change is in *me*—in my vision of the evidences.

People pretend that the Bible means the same to them at 50 that it did at all former milestones in their journey. I wonder how they can lie so. It comes of practice, no doubt. They would not say that of Dickens's or Scott's books. *Nothing* remains the same. When a man goes back to look at the house of his childhood, it has always *shrunk* : there is no instance of such a house being as big as the picture in memory and imagination call for. Shrunk how ? Why, to its correct dimensions : the house hasn't altered ; this is the first time it has been in focus.

Well, that's loss. To have house and Bible shrink so, under the disillusioning corrected angle, is loss—for a moment. But there are compensations. You tilt the



tube skyward and bring planets and comets and corona flames a hundred and fifty thousand miles high into the field. Which I see you have done, and found Tolstoi. I haven't got him in focus yet, but I've got Browning. . . .

Ys Ever

MARK.

Samuel Clemens was one of the very few authors to copyright a book in England before the enactment of the international copyright law. As early as 1872 he copyrighted *Roughing It* in England. Finally, in 1887, the inland revenue office assessed him with income tax, which he very willingly paid, instructing his London publishers, Chatto & Windus, to pay on the full amount he had received from them. But when the receipt for his taxes came it was nearly a yard square with due postage of considerable amount. Then he wrote :

*To Mr. Chatto, of Chatto & Windus, in London :*

Hartford, Dec. 5, '87.

MY DEAR CHATTO,—Look here, I don't mind paying the tax, but don't you let the Inland Revenue Office send me any more receipts for it, for the postage is something perfectly demoralizing. If they feel obliged to print a receipt on a horse-blanket, why don't they hire a ship and send it over at their own expense ?

Wasn't it good that they caught me out with an old book instead of a new one ? The tax on a new book would bankrupt a body. It was my purpose to go to England next May and stay the rest of the year, but I've found that tax office out just in time. My new book would issue in March, and they would tax the sale in both countries. Come, we must get up a compromise somehow. You go and work it on the good side of those revenue people and get them to take the profits and give me the tax. Then I will come over and we will divide the swag and have a good time.

I wish you to thank Mr. Christmas for me ; but we

won't resist. The country that allows me copyright has a right to tax me.

Sincerely Yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

Another English tax assessment came that year, based on the report that it was understood that he was going to become an English resident, and had leased Buckenham Hall, Norwich, for a year. Clemens wrote his publishers: "I will explain that all that about Buckenham Hall was an English newspaper's mistake. I was not in England, and if I had been I wouldn't have been at Buckenham Hall, anyway, but at Buckenham Palace, or I would have endeavoured to find out the reason why." Clemens made literature out of this tax experience. He wrote an open letter to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. It was published in the "Drawer" of *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1887, and is now included in the uniform edition of his works under the title of, "A Petition to the Queen of England."

Authors were always sending their books to Mark Twain to read, and no busy man was ever more kindly disposed toward such offerings, more generously considerate of the senders. Louis Pendleton was a young unknown writer in 1888, but Clemens took time to read his story carefully, and to write to him about it a letter that cost precious time, thought, and effort.

*To Louis Pendleton, in Georgia :*

Elmira, N. Y., Aug. 4, '88.

MY DEAR SIR,—I found your letter an hour ago among some others which had lain forgotten a couple of weeks, and I at once stole time enough to read *Ariadne*. Stole is the right word, for the summer "Vacation" is the only chance I get for work; so, no minute subtracted from work is borrowed, it is stolen. But this time I do not repent. As a rule, people don't send me books which I can thank them for, and so I say nothing—which looks uncourteous. But I thank you. *Ariadne* is a beautiful and satisfying story; and true, too—which is the best part of a story; or indeed of any other thing. Even liars have to admit that, if they are intelligent liars; I mean

in their private [the word conscientious written but erased] intervals. (I struck that word out because a man's private thought can never be a lie; what he thinks, is to him the truth, always; what he speaks—but these be platitudes.)

If you want me to pick some flaws—very well—but I do it unwillingly. I notice one thing—which one may notice also in my books, and in all books whether written by man or God: trifling carelessness of statement or Expression. If I think that you meant that she took the lizard from the water which she *had drawn* from the well, it is evidence—it is almost proof—that your words were not as clear as they should have been. True, it is only a trifling thing; but so is must on a mirror. I would have hung a pail on Ariadne's arm. You did not deceive me when you said that she carried it under her arm, for I knew she didn't; still it was not your right to mar my enjoyment of the graceful picture. If the pail had been a portfolio, I wouldn't be making these remarks. The engraver of a fine picture revises, and revises, and revises—and then revises, and revises, and revises; and then repeats. And always the charm of that picture grows, under his hand. It was good enough before—told its story, and was beautiful. True: and a lovely girl is lovely, with freckles; but she isn't at her level best with them.

This is not hypercriticism; you have had training enough to know that.

So much concerning exactness of statement. In that other not-small matter—selection of the exact single *word*—you are hard to catch. Still, I should hold that Mrs. Walker considered that there was no occasion for concealment; that "motive" implied a deeper mental search than she expended on the matter; that it doesn't reflect the attitude of her mind with precision. Is this hypercriticism? I shan't dispute it. I only say, that if Mrs. Walker didn't go so far as to have a motive, I had; to

suggest that when a word is so near the right one that a body can't quite tell whether it is or isn't, it's good politics to strike it out and go for the Thesaurus. That's all. Motive may stand; but you have allowed a snake to scream, and I will not concede that that was the best word.

I do not apologize for saying these things, for they are not said in the speck-hunting spirit, but in the spirit of want-to-help-if-I-can. They would be useful to me if said to me once a month, they may be useful to you, said once.

I save the other stories for my real vacation—which is nine months long, to my sorrow. I thank you again.

Truly Yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain that year was working pretty steadily on *The Yankee at King Arthur's Court*, a book which he had begun two years before. He had published nothing since the *Huck Finn* story, and his company was badly in need of a new book by an author of distinction. Also it was highly desirable to earn money for himself; wherefore he set to work to finish the *Yankee* story. He had worked pretty steadily that summer in his Elmira study, but on his return to Hartford found a good deal of confusion in the house, so went over to Twichell's, where carpenter work was in progress. He seems to have worked there successfully, though what improvement of conditions he found in that numerous, lively household, over those at home it would be difficult to say.

*To Theodore W. Crane, at Quarry Farm, Elmira, N.Y.*

Friday, Oct. 5, '88.

DEAR THEO,—I am here in Twichell's house at work, with the noise of the children and an army of carpenters to help. Of course they don't help, but neither do they hinder. It's like a boiler-factory for racket, and in nailing a wooden ceiling onto the room under me the hammering tickles my feet amazingly sometimes, and jars my table a good deal; but I never am conscious of the racket at all,



MRS. CLEMENS ABOUT 1885



and I move my feet into position of relief without knowing when I do it. I began here Monday morning, and have done eighty pages since. I was so tired last night that I thought I would lie abed and rest, to-day; but I couldn't resist. I mean to try to knock off to-morrow, but it's doubtful if I do. I want to finish the day the machine finishes, and a week ago the closest calculations for that indicated Oct. 22—but experience teaches me that their calculations will miss fire, as usual.

The other day the children were projecting a purchase, Livy and I to furnish the money—a dollar and a half. Jean discouraged the idea. She said: "We haven't got any money. Children, if you would think, you would remember the machine isn't done."

It's billiards to-night. I wish you were here.

With love to you both—

S. L. C.

P.S. I got it all wrong. It wasn't the children, it was Marie. She wanted a box of blacking, for the children's shoes. Jean reproved her—and said:

"Why, Marie, you mustn't *ask* for things now. The machine isn't done."

S. L. C.

Evidently the type-setting conditions had alarmed Orion, and he was undertaking some economies with a view of retrenchment. Orion was always reducing economy to science. Once, at an earlier date, he recorded that he had figured his personal living expenses down to sixty cents a week, but inasmuch as he was then, by his own confession, unable to earn the sixty cents, this particular economy was wasted. Orion was a trial, certainly, and the explosion that follows was not without excuse. Furthermore, it was not as bad as it sounds. Mark Twain's rages always had an element of humour in them, a fact which no one more than Orion himself would appreciate. He preserved this letter, quietly noting on the envelope, "Letter from Sam, about ma's nurse."

*Letter to Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:*

Nov. 29, '88.

Jesus Christ!—It is perilous to write such a man. You can go crazy on less material than anybody that ever

lived. What in hell has produced all these maniacal imaginings? You told me you *had* hired an attendant for ma. Now hire one instantly, and stop this nonsense of wearing Mollie and yourself out trying to do that nursing yourselves. Hire the attendant, and tell me her cost so that I can instruct Webster & Co. to add it every month to what they already send. Don't fool away any more time about this. And don't write me any more damned rot about "storms," and inability to pay trivial sums of money and—and—hell and *damnation*! You see I've read only the first page of your letter; I wouldn't read the rest for a million dollars.

Yr SAM.

P.S. Don't imagine that I have lost my temper, because I swear. I swear all day, but I do not lose my temper. And don't imagine that I am on my way to the poorhouse, for I am not; or that I am uneasy, for I am not; or that I am uncomfortable or unhappy—for *I never am*. I don't know what it is to be unhappy or uneasy; and I am not going to try to learn how, at this late date.

SAM.

Few men were ever interviewed oftener than Mark Twain, yet he never welcomed interviewers and was seldom satisfied with them. "What I say in an interview loses its character in print," he often remarked, "all its life and personality. The reporter realizes this himself, and tries to improve upon me, but he doesn't help matters any."

Edward W. Bok, before he became editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, was conducting a weekly syndicate column under the title of "Bok's Literary Leaves." It usually consisted of news and gossip of writers, comment, etc., literary odds and ends, and occasional interviews with distinguished authors. He went up to Hartford one day to interview Mark Twain. The result seemed satisfactory to Bok, but wishing to be certain that it would be satisfactory to Clemens, he sent him a copy for approval.

*To Edward W. Bok, in New York :*

MY DEAR MR. BOK,—No, no. It is like most interviews, pure twaddle and valueless.



For several quite plain and simple reasons, an "interview" must, as a rule, be an absurdity, and chiefly for this reason—It is an attempt to use a boat on land or a wagon on water, to speak figuratively. Spoken speech is one thing, written speech is quite another. Print is the proper vehicle for the latter, but it isn't for the former. The moment "talk" is put into print you recognize that it is not what it was when you heard it; you perceive that an immense something has disappeared from it. That is its soul. You have nothing but a dead carcass left on your hands. Color, play of feature, the varying modulations of the voice, the laugh, the smile, the informing inflections, everything that gave that body warmth, grace, friendliness and charm and commended it to your affections—or, at least, to your tolerance—is gone and nothing is left but a pallid, stiff and repulsive cadaver.

Such is "talk" almost invariably, as you see it lying in state in an "interview." The interviewer seldom tries to tell one *how* a thing was said; he merely puts in the naked remark and stops there. When one writes for print his methods are very different. He follows forms which have but little resemblance to conversation, but they make the reader understand what the writer is trying to convey. And when the writer is making a story and finds it necessary to report some of the talk of his characters observe how cautiously and anxiously he goes at that risky and difficult thing. "If he had dared to say that thing in my presence," said Alfred, taking a mock heroic attitude, and casting an arch glance upon the company, "blood would have flowed."

"If he had dared to say that thing in my presence," said Hawkwood, with that in his eye which caused more than one heart in that guilty assemblage to quake, "blood would have flowed."

"If he had dared to say that thing in my presence," said the paltry blusterer, with valor on his tongue and pallor on his lips, "blood would have flowed."

So painfully aware is the novelist that naked talk in print conveys no meaning that he loads, and often overloads, almost every utterance of his characters with explanations and interpretations. It is a loud confession that print is a poor vehicle for "talk"; it is a recognition that uninterpreted talk in print would result in confusion to the reader, not instruction.

Now, in your interview, you have certainly been most accurate; you have set down the sentences I uttered as I said them. But you have not a word of explanation; what my manner was at several points is not indicated. Therefore, no reader can possibly know where I was in earnest and where I was joking; or whether I was joking altogether or in earnest altogether. Such a report of a conversation has no value. It can convey many meanings to the reader, but never the right one. To add interpretations which would convey the right meaning is a something which would require—what? An art so high and fine and difficult that no possessor of it would ever be allowed to waste it on interviews.

No; spare the reader and spare me; leave the whole interview out; it is rubbish. I wouldn't talk in my sleep if I couldn't talk better than that.

If you wish to print anything print this letter; it may have some value, for it may explain to a reader here and there why it is that in interviews, as a rule, men seem to talk like anybody but themselves.

Very sincerely yours,

MARK TWAIN.

In January, 1889, Clemens believed, after his long seven years of waiting, fruition had come in the matter of the type machine. Paige, the inventor, seemed at last to have given it its finishing touches. The mechanical marvel that had cost so much time, mental stress, and a fortune in money, stood complete, responsive to the human will and touch—the latest, and one of the greatest, wonders of the world. To George Standring, a London printer and publisher, Clemens wrote: "The machine is finished!" and added, "This is by far the most marvellous

invention ever contrived by man. And it is not a thing of rags and patches; it is made of massive steel, and will last a century."

*To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk :*

Hartford, Jan. 5, '89.

DEAR ORION,—At 12.20 this afternoon a line of movable types was spaced and justified by machinery, for the first time in the history of the world ! And I was there to see. It was done *automatically*—instantly—perfectly. This is indeed the first line of movable types that ever *was* perfectly spaced and perfectly justified on this earth.

This was the last function that remained to be tested—and so by long odds the most amazing and extraordinary invention ever born of the brain of man stands completed and perfect. Livy is down stairs celebrating.

But it's a cunning devil, is that machine !—and knows more than any man that ever lived. You shall see. We made the test in this way. We set up a lot of random letters in a stick—three-fourths of a line ; then filled out the line with quads representing 14 spaces, each space to be 35–1000 of an inch thick. Then we threw aside the quads and put the letters into the machine and formed them into 15 two-letter words, leaving the words separated by two-inch vacancies. Then we started up the machine slowly, by hand, and fastened our eyes on the space-selecting pins. The first pin-block projected its third pin as the first word came traveling along the race-way ; second block did the same ; but the third block projected its *second* pin !

" Oh, hell ! stop the machine—something wrong—it's going to set a 30–1000 space ! "

General consternation. " A foreign substance has got into the spacing plates." This from the head mathematician.

" Yes, that is the trouble," assented the foreman.

Paige examined. " No—look in, and you can see that

there's nothing of the kind." Further examination. "Now I know what it is—what it *must* be: one of those plates projects and binds. It's too bad—the first test is a failure." A *pause*. "Well, boys, no use to cry. Get to work—take the machine down.—No—Hold on! don't touch a thing! Go right ahead! We are fools, the machine isn't. The machine knows what it's about. There is a *speck of dirt* on one of those types, and the machine is putting in a thinner space to *allow* for it!"

That was just it. The machine went right ahead, spaced the line, justified it to a hair, and shoved it into the galley complete and perfect! We took it out and examined it with a glass. You could not tell by your eye that the third space was thinner than the others, but the glass and the calipers showed the difference. Paige had always said that the machine would measure invisible particles of dirt and allow for them, but even he had forgotten that vast fact for the moment.

All the witnesses made written record of the immense historical birth—the first justification of a line of movable type by machinery—and also set down the hour and the minute. Nobody had drank anything, and yet everybody seemed drunk. Well—dizzy, stupefied, stunned.

All the other wonderful inventions of the human brain sink pretty nearly into commonplace contrasted with this awful mechanical miracle. Telephones, telegraphs, locomotives, cotton gins, sewing machines, Babbage calculators, Jacquard looms, perfecting presses, Arkwright's frames—all mere toys, simplicities! The Paige Compositor marches alone and far in the lead of human inventions.

In two or three weeks we shall work the stiffness out of her joints and have her performing as smoothly and softly as human muscles, and then we shall speak out the big secret and let the world come and gaze.

Return me this letter when you have read it.

SAM.

Judge of the elation which such a letter would produce in Keokuk! Yet it was no greater than that which existed in Hartford—for a time.

Then further delays. Before the machine got "the stiffness out of her joints" that "cunning devil" manifested a tendency to break the types, and Paige, who was never happier than when he was pulling things apart and making improvements, had the type-setter apart again and the day of complete triumph was postponed.

*A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* was brought to an end that year and given to the artist and printer. Dan Beard was selected for the drawings, and was given a free hand, as the next letter shows.

*To Fred J. Hall, Manager Charles L. Webster & Co. : <sup>1</sup>*

Elmira, July 24, '89.

DEAR MR. HALL,—Upon reflection—thus: tell Beard to obey his *own* inspiration, and when he sees a picture in his mind put *that* picture on paper, be it humorous or be it serious. I want his genius to be wholly unhampered, I shan't have fears as to the result. They will be better pictures than if I mixed in and tried to give him points on his own trade.

Send this note and he'll understand.

Yr—

S. L. C.

Clemens had made a good choice in selecting Beard for the illustrations. He was well qualified for the work, and being of a socialistic turn of mind put his whole soul into it. When the drawings were completed, Clemens wrote: "Hold me under permanent obligations. What luck it was to find you! There are hundreds of artists that could illustrate any other book of mine, but there was only one who could illustrate this one. Yes, it was a fortunate hour that I went netting for lightning bugs and caught a meteor. Live forever!"

Clemens, of course, was anxious for Howells to read *The Yankee*, and Mrs. Clemens particularly so. Her eyes were giving her trouble that summer, so that she could not read the MS. for herself, and she had grave doubts as to some of its chapters. It may be said here that the book to-day might have

<sup>1</sup> Charles L. Webster, owing to poor health, had by this time retired from the firm.

been better if Mrs. Clemens had been able to read it. Howells was a peerless critic, but the revolutionary subject-matter of the book so delighted him that he was perhaps somewhat blinded to its literary defects.

Howells's approval of the *Yankee* came almost in the form of exultant shouts, one after reading each batch of proof. First he wrote: "It's charming, original, wonderful! good in fancy and sound to the core in morals." And again, "It's a mighty great book, and it makes my heart burn with wrath. It seems God did not forget to put a soul into you. He shuts most literary men off with a brain, merely."

The type-setting machine began to loom large in the background. Clemens believed it perfected by this time. Paige had got it together again and it was running steadily—or approximately so—setting type at a marvellous speed and with perfect accuracy. In time an expert operator would be able to set as high as eight thousand ems per hour, or about ten times as much as a good compositor could set and distribute by hand. Those who saw it were convinced—most of them—that the type-setting problem was solved by this great mechanical miracle. If there were any who doubted, it was because of its marvellously minute accuracy which the others only admired. Such accuracy, it was sometimes whispered, required absolutely perfect adjustment, and what would happen when the great inventor—"the poet in steel," as Clemens once called him—was no longer at hand to supervise and to correct the slightest variation? But no such breath of doubt came to Mark Twain; he believed the machine as reliable as a constellation.

But now there was need of capital to manufacture and market the wonder. Clemens, casting about in his mind, remembered Senator Jones, of Nevada, a man of great wealth, and his old friend, Joe Goodman, of Nevada, in whom Jones had unlimited confidence. He wrote to Goodman, and in this letter we get a pretty full exposition of the whole matter as it stood in the fall of 1889. We note in this communication that Clemens says that he has been at the machine three years and seven months, but this was only the period during which he had spent the regular monthly sum of three thousand dollars. His interest in the invention had begun as far back as 1880.

*To Joseph T. Goodman, in Nevada :*

*Private.*

Hartford, Oct. 7, '89.

DEAR JOE,—I had a letter from Aleck Badlam day before yesterday, and in answering him I mentioned a

matter which I asked him to consider a secret except to you and John McComb,<sup>1</sup> as I am not ready yet to get into the newspapers.

I have come near writing you about this matter several times, but it wasn't ripe, and I waited. It is ripe, now. It is a type-setting machine which I undertook to build for the inventor (for a consideration). I have been at it three years and seven months without losing a day, at a cost of \$3,000 a month, and in so private a way that Hartford has known nothing about it. Indeed only a dozen men have known of the matter. I have reported progress from time to time to the proprietors of the N. Y. Sun, Herald, Times, World, Harper Brothers and John F. Trow; also to the proprietors of the Boston Herald and the Boston Globe. Three years ago I asked all these people to squelch their frantic desire to load up their offices with the Mergenthaler (N. Y. Tribune) machine, and wait for mine and then choose between the two. They have waited—with no very gaudy patience—but still they have waited; and I could prove to them to-day that they have not lost anything by it. But I reserve the proof for the present—except in the case of the N. Y. Herald; I sent an invitation there the other day—a courtesy due a paper which ordered \$240,000 worth of our machines long ago when it was still in a crude condition. The Herald has ordered its foreman to come up here next Thursday; but that is the only invitation which will go out for some time yet.

The machine was finished several weeks ago, and has been running ever since in the machine shop. It is a magnificent creature of steel, all of Pratt & Whitney's superbest workmanship, and as nicely adjusted and as accurate as a watch. In construction it is as elaborate and complex as that machine which it ranks *next* to, by every right—Man—and in performance it is as simple and sure.

<sup>1</sup> This is Col. McComb, of the *Alta-California*, who had sent Mark Twain on the *Quaker City* excursion.

Anybody can set type on it who can read—and can do it after only 15 minutes' instruction. The operator does not need to leave his seat at the keyboard; for the reason that he is not required to do anything but strike the keys and set the type—merely one function; the spacing, justifying, emptying into the galley, and distributing of dead matter is all done by the machine without anybody's help—four functions.

The ease with which a cub can learn is surprising. Day before yesterday I saw our newest cub set, perfectly space and perfectly justify 2,150 ems of solid nonpareil in an hour and distribute the like amount in the same hour—and six hours previously he had never seen the machine or its keyboard. It was a good hour's work for 3-year *veterans* on the other type-setting machines to do. We have 3 cubs. The dean of the trio is a school youth of 18. Yesterday morning he had been an apprentice on the machine 16 working days (8-hour days); and we speeded him to see what he could do in an hour. In the hour he set 5,900 ems solid nonpareil, and the machine perfectly spaced and justified it, and of course distributed the like amount in the same hour. Considering that a good fair compositor sets 700 and distributes 700 in the one hour, this boy did the work of about 8½ compositors in that hour. This fact sends all other type-setting machines a thousand miles to the rear, and the best of them will never be heard of again after we publicly exhibit in New York.

We shall put on 3 more cubs. We have one school boy and two compositors, now, and we think of putting on a type writer, a stenographer, and perhaps a shoemaker, to show that no special gifts or training are required with this machine. We shall train these beginners two or three months—or until some of them get up to 7,000 an hour—then we will show up in New York and run the machine 24 hours a day 7 days in the week, for several months—to prove that this is a machine which will never



get out of order or cause delay, and can stand anything an anvil can stand. You know there is no other type-setting machine that can run two hours on a stretch without causing trouble and delay with its incurable caprices.

We own the whole field—every inch of it—and nothing can dislodge us.

Now then, above is my preachment, and here follows the reason and purpose of it. I want you to run over here, roost over the machine a week and satisfy yourself, and then go to John P. Jones or to whom you please, and sell me a hundred thousand dollars' worth of this property and take ten per cent in cash or the "property" for your trouble—the latter, if you are wise, because the price I ask is a long way short of the value.

What I call "property" is this. A small part of my ownership consists of a royalty of \$500 on every machine marketed under the American patents. My selling-terms are a permanent royalty of one dollar on every American-marketed machine for a thousand dollars cash to me in hand paid. We shan't market any fewer than 15,000 machines in 15 years—a return of fifteen thousand dollars for one thousand. A royalty is better than stock, in one way—it must be paid, every six months, rain or shine; it is a debt, and must be paid before dividends are declared. By and by, when we become a stock company I shall buy these royalties back for stock if I can get them for anything like reasonable terms.

I have never borrowed a penny to use on the machine, and never sold a penny's worth of the property until the machine was entirely finished and proven by the severest tests to be what she started out to be—perfect, permanent, and occupying the position, as regards all kindred machines, which the City of Paris occupies as regards the canvas-backs of the mercantile marine.

It is my purpose to sell two hundred dollars of my royalties at the above price during the next two months and keep the other \$300.

Mrs. Clemens begs Mrs. Goodman to come with you, and asks pardon for not writing the message herself—which would be a pathetically-welcome spectacle to me; for I have been her amanuensis for 8 months, now, since her eyes failed her.

Yours as always

MARK.

The *Yankee* was now ready for publication, and advance sheets were already in the reviewers' hands. Just at this moment the Brazilian monarchy crumbled, and Clemens was moved to write Sylvester Baxter, of the Boston *Herald*, a letter which is of special interest in its prophecy of the new day, the dawn of which was even nearer than he suspected.

DEAR MR. BAXTER,—Another throne has gone down, and I swim in oceans of satisfaction. I wish I might live fifty years longer; I believe I should see the thrones of Europe selling at auction for old iron. I believe I should really see the end of what is surely the grotesquest of all the swindles ever invented by man—monarchy. It is enough to make a graven image laugh, to see apparently rational people, away down here in this wholesome and merciless slaughter-day for shams, still mouthing empty reverence for those moss-backed frauds and scoundrelisms, hereditary kingship and so-called "nobility." It is enough to make the monarchs and nobles themselves laugh—and in private they do; there can be no question about that. I think there is only one funnier thing, and that is the spectacle of these bastard Americans—these Hamersleys and Huntingtons and such—offering cash, encumbered by themselves, for rotten carcasses and stolen titles. When our great brethren the disenslaved Brazilians frame their Declaration of Independence, I hope they will insert this missing link: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all monarchs are usurpers, and descendants of usurpers; for the reason that no throne was ever set up in this world by the will, freely exercised,

of the only body possessing the legitimate right to set it up—the numerical mass of the nation.”

You already have the advance sheets of my forthcoming book in your hands. If you will turn to about the five hundredth page, you will find a state paper of my Connecticut Yankee in which he announces the dissolution of King Arthur's monarchy and proclaims the English Republic. Compare it with the state paper which announces the downfall of the Brazilian monarchy and proclaims the Republic of the United States of Brazil, and stand by to defend the Yankee from plagiarism. There is merely a resemblance of ideas, nothing more. The Yankee's proclamation was already in print a week ago. This is merely one of those odd coincidences which are always turning up. Come, protect the Yank from that cheapest and easiest of all charges—plagiarism. Otherwise, you see, he will have to protect himself by charging approximate and indefinite plagiarism upon the official servants of our majestic twin down yonder, and then there might be war, or some similar annoyance.

Have you noticed the rumor that the Portuguese throne is unsteady, and that the Portuguese slaves are getting restive? Also, that the head slave-driver of Europe, Alexander III, has so reduced his usual monthly order for chains that the Russian foundries are running on only half time now? Also that other rumor that English nobility acquired an added stench the other day—and had to ship it to India and the continent because there wasn't any more room for it at home? Things are working. By and by there is going to be an emigration, may be. Of course we shall make no preparation; we never do. In a few years from now we shall have nothing but played-out kings and dukes on the police, and driving the horse-cars, and whitewashing fences, and in fact overcrowding all the avenues of unskilled labor; and then we shall wish, when it is too late, that we had taken common and reasonable precautions and drowned them at Castle Garden.

The *Yankee* had come from the press, and Howells had praised it in the "Editor's Study" in *Harper's Magazine*. He had given it his highest commendation, and it seems that his opinion of it did not change with time.

The *Yankee* did not find a very hearty welcome in England. English readers did not fancy any burlesque of their Arthurian tales, or American strictures on their institutions. Mark Twain's publishers had feared this, and asked that the story be especially edited for the English edition. Clemens, however, would not listen to any suggestion of the sort.

*To Messrs. Chatto & Windus, in London, Eng. :*

GENTLEMEN,—Concerning The *Yankee*, I have already revised the story twice; and it has been read critically by W. D. Howells and Edmund Clarence Stedman, and my wife has caused me to strike out several passages that have been brought to her attention, and to soften others. Furthermore, I have read chapters of the book in public where Englishmen were present and have profited by their suggestions.

Now, mind you, I have taken all this pains because I wanted to say a Yankee mechanic's say against monarchy and its several natural props, and yet make a book which you would be willing to print exactly as it comes to you, without altering a word.

We are spoken of (by Englishmen) as a thin-skinned people. It is you who are thin-skinned. An Englishman may write with the most brutal frankness about any man or institution among us and we re-publish him without dreaming of altering a line or a word. But England cannot stand that kind of a book written about herself. It is England that is thin-skinned. It causeth me to smile when I read the modifications of my language which have been made in my English editions to fit them for the sensitive English palate.

Now, as I say, I have taken laborious pains to so trim this book of offense that you might not lack the nerve to print it just as it stands. I am going to get the proofs

to you just as early as I can. I want you to read it carefully. If you can publish it without altering a single word, go ahead. Otherwise, please hand it to J. R. Osgood in time for him to have it published at my expense.

This is important, for the reason that the book was not written for America ; it was written for England. So many Englishmen have done their sincerest best to teach us something for our betterment that it seems to me high time that some of us should substantially recognize the good intent by trying to pry up the English nation to a little higher level of manhood in turn.

Very truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The English papers pretty generally denounced the book as coarse ; in fact, a vulgar travesty. Some of the critics concluded that England, after all, had made a mistake in admiring Mark Twain.

*To Andrew Lang, in London :*

1889.

. . . The critic assumes, every time, that if a book doesn't meet the cultivated-class standard, it isn't valuable. Let us apply his law all around : for if it is sound in the case of novels, narratives, pictures, and such things, it is certainly sound and applicable to all the steps which lead up to culture and make culture possible. It condemns the spelling book, for a spelling book is of no use to a person of culture ; it condemns all school books and all schools which lie between the child's primer and Greek, and between the infant school and the university ; it condemns all the rounds of art which lie between the cheap terra cotta groups and the Venus de Medici, and between the chromo and the Transfiguration ; it requires Whitcomb Ruley to sing no more till he can sing like Shakespeare, and it forbids all amateur music and will grant its sanction to nothing below the " classic."

Is this an extravagant statement? No, it is a mere statement of fact. It is the fact itself that is extravagant and grotesque. And what is the result? This—and it is sufficiently curious: the critic has actually imposed upon the world the superstition that a painting by Raphael is more valuable to the civilizations of the earth than is a chromo; and the august opera than the hurdy-gurdy and the villagers' singing society; and Homer than the little everybody's-poet whose rhymes are in all mouths to-day and will be in nobody's mouth next generation; and the Latin classics than Kipling's far-reaching bugle-note; and Jonathan Edwards than the Salvation Army; and the Venus de Medici than the plaster-cast peddler; the superstition, in a word, that the vast and awful comet that trails its cold lustre through the remote abysses of space once a century and interests and instructs a cultivated handful of astronomers is worth more to the world than the sun which warms and cheers all the nations every day and makes the crops to grow.

If a critic should start a religion it would not have any object but to convert angels: and they wouldn't need it. The thin top crust of humanity—the cultivated—are worth pacifying, worth pleasing, worth coddling, worth nourishing and preserving with dainties and delicacies, it is true; but to be caterer to that little faction is no very dignified or valuable occupation, it seems to me; it is merely feeding the over-fed, and there must be small satisfaction in that. It is not that little minority who are already saved that are best worth trying to uplift, I should think, but the mighty mass of the uncultivated who are underneath. That mass will never see the Old Masters—that sight is for the few; but the chromo maker can lift them all one step upward toward appreciation of art; they cannot have the opera, but the hurdy-gurdy and the singing class lift them a little way toward that far light; they will never know Homer, but the passing rhymester of their day leaves them higher than he found

them; they may never even hear of the Latin classics, but they will strike step with Kipling's drum-beat, and they will march; for all Jonathan Edward's help they would die in their slums, but the Salvation Army will beguile some of them up to pure air and a cleaner life; they know no sculpture, the Venus is not even a name to them, but they are a grade higher in the scale of civilization by the ministrations of the plaster-cast than they were before it took its place upon their mantel and made it beautiful to their unexacting eyes.

Indeed I have been misjudged, from the very first. I have never tried in even one single instance, to help cultivate the cultivated classes. I was not equipped for it, either by native gifts or training. And I never had any ambition in that direction, but always hunted for bigger game—the masses. I have seldom deliberately tried to instruct them, but have done my best to entertain them. To simply amuse them would have satisfied my dearest ambition at any time; for they could get instruction elsewhere, and I had two chances to help to the teacher's one: for amusement is a good preparation for study and a good healer of fatigue after it. My audience is dumb, it has no voice in print, and so I cannot know whether I have won its approbation or only got its censure.

Yes, you see, I have always catered for the Belly and the Members, but have been served like the others—criticized from the culture-standard—to my sorrow and pain; because, honestly, I never cared what became of the cultured classes; they could go to the theatre and the opera, they had no use for me and the melodeon.

And now at last I arrive at my object and tender my petition, making supplication to this effect: that the critics adopt a rule recognizing the Belly and the Members, and formulate a standard whereby work done for them shall be judged. Help me, Mr. Lang; no voice can reach further than yours in a case of this kind, or carry greater weight of authority.

Lang's reply was an article in the *Illustrated London News* on "The Art of Mark Twain." Lang had no admiration to express for the *Yankee*, which he confessed he had not cared to read, but he glorified *Huck Finn* to the highest. "I can never forget, nor be ungrateful for the exquisite pleasure with which I read *Huckleberry Finn* for the first time, years ago," he wrote; "I read it again last night, deserting *Kenilworth* for *Huck*. I never laid it down till I had finished it."

The Mergenthaler machine, like the Paige, was also at this time in the middle stages of experimental development. It was a slower machine, but it was simpler, less expensive, occupied less room. There was not so much about it to get out of order; it was not so delicate, not so human. These were immense advantages.

But no one at this time could say with certainty which type-setter would reap the harvest of millions. It was only sure that at least one of them would, and the Mergenthaler people were willing to trade stock for stock with the Paige company in order to ensure financial success for both, whichever won. Clemens, with a faith that never faltered, declined this offer, a decision that was to cost him millions.

Winter and spring had gone and summer had come, but still there had been no financial conclusion with Jones, Mackay, and the other rich Californians who were to put up the necessary million for the machine's manufacture.

*To Joe T. Goodman, in Washington :*

Hartford, June, 22 '90.

DEAR JOE,—I have been sitting by the machine 2½ hours, this afternoon, and my admiration of it towers higher than ever. There is no sort of mistake about it, it is the Big Bonanza. In the 2½ hours, the time lost by type-breakage was 3 minutes.

This machine is totally without a rival. Rivalry with it is impossible. Last Friday, Fred Whitmore (it was the 28th day of his apprenticeship on the machine) stacked up 49,700 ems of solid nonpareil in 8 hours, and the type-breaking delay was only 6 minutes for the day.

I claim yet, as I have always claimed, that the machine's market (abroad and here together), is today worth \$150,000,000, without saying anything about the doubling



and trebling of this sum that will follow within the life of the patents. Now here is a queer fact: I am one of the wealthiest grandees in America—one of the Vanderbilt gang, in fact—and yet if you asked me to lend you a couple of dollars I should have to ask you to take my note instead.

It makes me cheerful to sit by the machine: come up with Mrs. Goodman and refresh yourself with a draught of the same.

Ys ever

MARK.

The machine was still breaking the types now and then, and no doubt Paige was itching to take it to pieces, and only restrained by force from doing so. Finally, he was allowed to go at it—a disastrous permission, for it was just then that Jones decided to steal a day or two from the Silver Bill and watch the type-setter in operation. Paige already had it in parts when this word came from Goodman, and Jones's visit had to be called off. His enthusiasm would seem to have weakened from that day. In July, Goodman wrote that both Mackay and Jones had become somewhat diffident in the matter of huge capitalization.

*An unpublished letter on the Czar.*

Onteora, 1890.

TO THE EDITOR OF FREE RUSSIA,—I thank you for the compliment of your invitation to say something, but when I ponder the bottom paragraph on your first page, and then study your statement on your third page, of the objects of the several Russian liberation-parties, I do not quite know how to proceed. Let me quote here the paragraph referred to:

“But men's hearts are so made that the sight of one voluntary victim for a noble idea stirs them more deeply than the sight of a crowd submitting to a dire fate they cannot escape. Besides, foreigners could not see so clearly as the Russians how much the Government was responsible for the grinding poverty of the masses; nor could they very well realize the moral wretchedness imposed

by that Government upon the whole of educated Russia. But the atrocities committed upon the defenceless prisoners are there in all their baseness, concrete and palpable, admitting of no excuse, no doubt or hesitation, crying out to the heart of humanity against Russian tyranny. And the Czar's Government, stupidly confident in its apparently unassailable position, instead of taking warning from the first rebukes, seems to mock this humanitarian age by the aggravation of brutalities. Not satisfied with slowly killing its prisoners, and with burying the flower of our young generation in the Siberian deserts, the Government of Alexander III. resolved to break their spirit by deliberately submitting them to a regime of unheard-of brutality and degradation."

When one reads that paragraph in the glare of George Kennan's revelations, and considers how much it means; considers that all earthly figures fail to typify the Czar's government, and that one must descend into hell to find its counterpart, one turns hopefully to your statement of the objects of the several liberation-parties—and is disappointed. Apparently none of them can bear to think of losing the present hell entirely, they merely want the temperature cooled down a little.

I now perceive why all men are the deadly and unpromising enemies of the rattlesnake: it is merely because the rattlesnake has not speech. Monarchy has speech, and by it has been able to persuade men that it differs somehow from the rattlesnake, has something valuable about it somewhere, something worth preserving, something even good and high and fine, when properly "modified," something entitling it to protection from the club of the first comer who catches it out of its hole. It seems a most strange delusion and not reconcilable with our superstition that man is a reasoning being. If a house is afire, we reason confidently that it is the first comer's plain duty to put the fire out in any way he can—drown it with water, blow it up with dynamite, use any and all

means to stop the spread of the fire and save the rest of the city. What is the Czar of Russia but a house afire in the midst of a city of eighty millions of inhabitants? Yet instead of extinguishing him, together with his nest and system, the liberation-parties are all anxious to merely cool him down a little and keep him.

It seems to me that this is illogical—idiotic, in fact. Suppose you had this granite-hearted, bloody-jawed maniac of Russia loose in your house, chasing the helpless women and little children—your own. What would you do with him, supposing you had a shotgun? Well, he *is* loose in your house—Russia. And with your shotgun in your hand, you stand trying to think up ways to “modify” him.

Do these liberation-parties think that they can succeed in a project which has been attempted a million times in the history of the world and has never in one single instance been successful—the “modification” of a despotism by other means than bloodshed? They seem to think they can. My privilege to write these sanguinary sentences in soft security was bought for me by rivers of blood poured upon many fields, in many lands, but I possess not one single little paltry right or privilege that comes to me as a result of petition, persuasion, agitation for reform, or any kindred method of procedure. When we consider that not even the most responsible English monarch ever yielded back a stolen public right until it was wrenched from them by bloody violence, is it rational to suppose that gentler methods can win privileges in Russia?

Of course I know that the properest way to demolish the Russian throne would be by revolution. But it is not possible to get up a revolution there; so the only thing left to do, apparently, is to keep the throne vacant by dynamite until a day when candidates shall decline with thanks. Then organize the Republic. And on the whole this method has some large advantages; for whereas a revolution destroys some lives which cannot well be

spared, the dynamite way doesn't. Consider this: the conspirators against the Czar's life are caught in every rank of life, from the low to the high. And consider: if so many take an active part, where the peril is so dire, is this not evidence that the sympathizers who keep still and do not show their hands, are countless for multitudes? Can you break the hearts of thousands of families with the awful Siberian exodus every year for generations and not eventually cover all Russia from limit to limit with bereaved fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters who secretly hate the perpetrator of this prodigious crime and hunger and thirst for his life? Do you not believe that if your wife or your child or your father was exiled to the mines of Siberia for some trivial utterances wrung from a smarting spirit by the Czar's intolerable tyranny, and you got a chance to kill him and did not do it, that you would always be ashamed to be in your own society the rest of your life? Suppose that that refined and lovely Russian lady who was lately stripped bare before a brutal soldiery and whipped to death by the Czar's hand in the person of the Czar's creature had been your wife, or your daughter or your sister, and to-day the Czar should pass within reach of your hand, how would you feel—and what would you do? Consider, that all over vast Russia, from boundary to boundary, a myriad of eyes filled with tears when that piteous news came, and through those tears that myriad of eyes saw, not that poor lady, but lost darlings of their own whose fate her fate brought back with new access of grief out of a black and bitter past never to be forgotten or forgiven.

If I am a Swinburnian—and clear to the marrow I am—I hold human nature in sufficient honor to believe there are eighty million mute Russians that are of the same stripe, and only one Russian family that isn't.

MARK TWAIN.

Clemens was still not without hope in the machine, at the beginning of the new year (1891), but it was a hope no longer

active, and it presently became moribund. Jones, about the middle of February, backed out altogether, laying the blame chiefly on Mackay and the others, who, he said, had decided not to invest.

It was also the end of Mark Twain's capital. His publishing business was not good. It was already in debt and needing more money. There was just one thing for him to do and he did it at once, not stopping to cry over spilt milk, but with good courage and the old enthusiasm that never failed him, he returned to the trade of authorship.

*Fragment of Letter to [Person Unknown], 1891 :*

. . . . I confine myself to life with which I am familiar when pretending to portray life. But I confined myself to the *boy-life* out on the Mississippi because that had a peculiar charm for me, and not because I was not familiar with other phases of life. I was a *soldier* two weeks once in the beginning of the war, and was hunted like a rat the whole time. Familiar? My splendid Kipling himself hasn't a more burnt-in, hard-baked, and unforgettable familiarity with that death-on-the-pale-horse-with-hell-following-after, which is a raw soldier's first fortnight in the field—and which, without any doubt, is the most tremendous fortnight and the vividest he is ever going to see.

Yes, and I have shoveled silver tailings in a quartz-mill a couple of weeks, and acquired the last possibilities of culture in *that* direction. And I've done "pocket-mining" during three months in the one little patch of ground in the whole globe where Nature conceals gold in pockets—or *did* before we robbed all of those pockets and exhausted, obliterated, annihilated the most curious freak Nature ever indulged in. There are not thirty men left alive who, being told there was a pocket hidden on the broad slope of a mountain, would know how to go and find it, or have even the faintest idea of how to set about it; but I am one of the possible 20 or 30 who possess the secret, and I could go and put my hand on that hidden treasure with a most deadly precision.

And I've been a prospector, and know pay rock from poor when I find it—just with a touch of the tongue. And I've been a *silver* miner and know how to dig and shovel and drill and put in a blast. And so I know the mines and the miners interiorly as well as Bret Harte knows them exteriorly.

And I was a newspaper reporter four years in cities, and so saw the inside of many things; and was reporter in a legislature two sessions and the same in Congress one session, and thus learned to know personally three sample bodies of the smallest minds and the selfishest souls and the cowardliest hearts that God makes.

And I was some years a Mississippi pilot, and familiarly knew all the different kinds of steamboatmen—a race apart, and not like other folk.

And I was for some years a traveling “jour” printer, and wandered from city to city—and so I know *that* sect familiarly.

And I was a lecturer on the public platform a number of seasons and was a responder to toasts at all the different kinds of banquets—and so I know a great many secrets about audiences—secrets not to be got out of books, but only acquirable by experience.

And I watched over one dear project of mine for years, spent a fortune on it, and failed to make it go—and the history of that would make a large book in which a million men would see themselves as in a mirror; and they would testify and say, Verily, this is not imagination; this fellow has been there—and after would cast dust upon their heads, cursing and blaspheming.

And I am a publisher, and did pay to one author's widow (General Grant's) the largest copyright checks this world has seen—aggregating more than £80,000 in the first year.

And I have been an author for 20 years and an ass for 55.

Now then; as the most valuable capital or culture or

education usable in the building of novels is personal experience I ought to be well equipped for that trade.

I surely have the equipment, a wide culture, and all of it real, none of it artificial, for I don't know anything about books.

[No signature.]

Clemens for several years had been bothered by rheumatism in his shoulder. The return now to the steady use of the pen aggravated his trouble, and at times he was nearly disabled.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, Feb. 28, '91.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Won't you drop in at the Boylston Building (New England Phonograph Co) and talk into a phonograph in an ordinary conversation-voice and see if another person (who didn't hear you do it) can take the words from the thing without difficulty and repeat them to you. If the experiment is satisfactory (also make somebody put in a message which *you* don't hear, and see if afterward *you* can get it out without difficulty) won't you then ask them on what terms they will rent me a phonograph for 3 months and furnish me cylinders enough to carry 75,000 words. 175 cylinders, ain't it ?

I don't want to erase any of them. My right arm is nearly disabled by rheumatism, but I am bound to write this book (and sell 100,000 copies of it—no, I mean a million—next fall). I feel sure I can dictate the book into a phonograph if I don't have to yell. I write 2,000 words a day ; I think I can dictate twice as many.

But mind, if this is going to be too much trouble to you—go ahead and do it, all the same.

Ys ever

MARK.

Clemens did not find the phonograph entirely satisfactory, at least not for a time, and he appears never to have used it steadily.

His residence in Hartford was drawing rapidly to a close.

Mrs. Clemens was poorly, and his own health was uncertain. They believed that some of the European baths would help them. Furthermore, he could no longer afford the luxury of his Hartford home. In Europe life could be simpler and vastly cheaper. He was offered a thousand dollars apiece for six European letters, by the McClure syndicate and W. M. Laffan, of the *Sun*. Howells, strangely enough, seems to have been about the last one to be told of their European plans; in fact, he first got wind of it from the papers, and wrote for information. Likely enough Clemens had not until then had the courage to confess.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Hartford, May 20, '91.

DEAR HOWELLS,—For her health's sake Mrs. Clemens *must* try baths somewhere, and this it is that has determined us to go to Europe. The water required seems to be provided at a little obscure and little-visited nook up in the hills back of the Rhine somewhere and you get to it by Rhine traffic-boat and country stage-coach. Come, get "sick or sorry enough" and join us. We shall be a little while at that bath, and the rest of the summer at Annecy (this confidential to you) in Haute Savoie, 22 miles from Geneva. Spend the winters in Berlin. I don't know how long we shall be in Europe—I have a vote, but I don't cast it. I'm going to do whatever the others desire, with leave to change their mind, without prejudice, whenever they want to. Travel has no longer any charm for me. I have seen all the foreign countries I want to see except heaven and hell, and I have only a vague curiosity as concerns one of those. . . .

Oh, look here—I did to-day what I have several times in past years thought of doing: answered an interviewing proposition from a rich newspaper with the reminder that they had not stated the terms; that my time was all occupied with writing, at good pay, and that as talking was harder work I should not care to venture it unless I knew the pay was going to be proportionately higher.



I wish I had thought of this the other day when Charley Stoddard turned a pleasant Englishman loose on me and I couldn't think of any rational excuse.

Ys Ever

MARK.

The house in Hartford was closed early in June, and on the 6th the family, with one maid, Katie Leary, sailed on the *Gascogne*. Two weeks later they had begun a residence abroad which was to last for more than nine years.

It was not easy to get to work in Europe. Clemens's arm remained lame, and any effort at writing brought suffering. The *Century Magazine* proposed another set of letters, but by the end of July he had barely begun on those promised to McClure and Laffan. He decided that he would arrange for no more European letters when the six were finished, but would gather material for a book. The idea finally matured when he reached Switzerland and settled the family at the Hotel Beau Rivage, Ouchy, Lausanne, facing Lake Leman. He decided to make a floating trip down the Rhone, and he engaged Joseph Very, a courier that had served him on a former European trip, to accompany him.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Ouchy, Switzerland :*

On the Rhone below Villebois,  
Tuesday noon

Good morning, sweetheart. Night caught us yesterday where we had to take quarters in a peasant's house which was occupied by the family and a lot of cows and calves—also several rabbits.<sup>1</sup> The latter had a ball, and I was the ball-room ; but they were very friendly and didn't bite.

The peasants were mighty kind and hearty, and flew around and did their best to make us comfortable. This morning I breakfasted on the shore in the open air with two sociable dogs and a cat. Clean cloth, napkin and table furniture, white sugar, a vast hunk of excellent butter, good bread, first class coffee with pure milk, fried fish just caught. Wonderful that so much cleanliness should come out of such a phenomenally dirty house. . . .

<sup>1</sup> His word for fleas.

Afloat—  
2 Hours below Bourg St. Andeol.  
Monday, 11 a.m., Sept. 28.

Livy darling, I didn't write yesterday. We left La Voulte in a driving storm of cold rain—couldn't write in it—and at 1 p.m. when we were not thinking of stopping, we saw a picturesque and mighty ruin on a high hill back of a village, and I was seized with a desire to explore it; so we landed at once and set out with rubbers and umbrella, sending the boat ahead to St. Andeol, and we spent 3 hours clambering about those cloudy heights among those worn and vast and idiotic ruins of a castle built by two crusaders 650 years ago. The work of these asses was full of interest, and we had a good time inspecting, examining and scrutinizing it. All the hills on both sides of the Rhone have peaks and precipices, and each has its grey and wasted pile of mouldy walls and broken towers. The Romans displaced the Gauls, the Visigoths displaced the Romans, the Saracens displaced the Visigoths, the Christians displaced the Saracens, and it was these pious animals who built these strange lairs and cut each other's throats in the name and for the glory of God, and robbed and burned and slew in peace and war; and the pauper and the slave built churches, and the credit of it went to the Bishop who racked the money out of them. These are pathetic shores, and they make one despise the human race.

We came down in an hour by rail, but I couldn't get your telegram till this morning, for it was Sunday and they had shut up the post office to go to the circus. I went, too. It was all one family—parents and 5 children—performing in the open air to 200 of these enchanted villagers, who contributed coppers when called on. It was a most gay and strange and pathetic show. I got up at 7 this morning to see the poor devils cook their poor breakfast and pack up their sordid fineries.

This is a 9 k-m. current and the wind is with us; we

shall make Avignon before 4 o'clock. I saw watermelons and pomegranates for sale at St. Andeol.

With a power of love, Sweetheart,  
SAML.

*To Clara Clemens, in Ouchy, Switzerland :*

Afloat, 11.20 a.m., Sept. 29, Tuesday.

DEAR OLD BEN,—The vast stone masses and huge towers of the ancient papal palace of Avignon are projected above an intervening wooded island a mile up the river behind me—for we are already on our way to Arles. It is a perfectly still morning, with a brilliant sun, and very hot—outside; but I am under cover of the linen hood, and it is cool and shady in here. . . .

The only adventures we have is in drifting into rough seas now and then. They are not dangerous, but they go thro' all the motions of it. Yesterday when we shot the Bridge of the Holy Spirit it was probably in charge of some inexperienced deputy spirit for the day, for we were allowed to go through the wrong arch, which brought us into a tourbillon below which tried to make this old scow stand on its head. Of course I lost my temper and blew it off in a way to be heard above the roar of the tossing waters. I lost it because the admiral had taken that arch in deference to *my* opinion that it was the best one, while his own judgment told him to take the one nearest the other side of the river. I could have poisoned him I was so mad to think I had hired such a turnip. A boatman in command should obey nobody's orders but his own, and yield to nobody's suggestions.

It was very sweet of you to write me, dear, and I thank you ever so much. With greatest love and kisses,

PAPA.

The Clemenses settled in Berlin for the winter, at 7 Kornerstrasse, and later at the Hotel Royal. Young Hall, his

publishing manager in America, was working hard to keep the business afloat, and being full of the optimism of his years did not fail to make as good a showing as he could.

*To Mr. Hall, in New York :*

Berlin, Nov. 27, '91.

DEAR MR. HALL,—That kind of a statement is valuable. It came this morning. This is the first time since the business began that I have had a report that furnished the kind of information I wanted, and was really enlightening and satisfactory. Keep it up. Don't let it fall into desuetude.

Everything looks so fine and handsome with the business, now, that I feel a great let-up from depression. The rewards of your long and patient industry are on their way, and their arrival safe in port, presently, seems assured.

By George, I shall be glad when the ship comes in !

My arm is so much better that I was able to make a speech last night to 250 Americans. But when they threw my portrait on the screen it was a sorrowful reminder for it was from a negative of 15 years ago, and hadn't a gray hair in it. And now that my arm is better, I have stolen a couple of days and finished up a couple of McClure letters that have been lying a long time.

I shall mail one of them to you next Tuesday—registered. Look out for it.

I shall register and mail the other one (concerning the "Jungfrau") next Friday—look out for it also, and drop me a line to let me know they have arrived.

I shall write the 6th and last letter by and by when I have studied Berlin sufficiently.

Yours in a most cheerful frame of mind, and with my and all the family's Thanksgiving greetings and best wishes,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain was the notable literary figure in Berlin that winter, the centre of every great gathering. He was entertained by the Kaiser, and shown many special attentions by Germans of every rank. He was too popular for his own good ; the gaiety of the capital told on him. Finally, one night, after delivering a lecture in a hot room, he contracted a severe cold, driving to a ball at General von Versen's, and a few days later was confined to his bed with pneumonia. It was not a severe attack, but it was long continued.

Clemens and his wife were advised to leave the cold of Berlin as soon as he was able to travel. This was not until the first of March, when, taking their old courier, Joseph Very, they left the children in good hands and journeyed to the south of France.

*To Susy Clemens, in Berlin :*

Mentone, March 22, '92.

SUSY DEAR,—I have been delighted to note your easy facility with your pen and proud to note also your literary superiorities of one kind and another—clearness of statement, directness, felicity of expression, photographic ability in setting forth an incident—style—good style—no barnacles on it in the way of unnecessary, retarding words (the shipman scrapes off the barnacles when he wants his racer to go her best gait and straight to the buoy.) You should write a letter every day, long or short—and so ought I, but I don't.

Mamma says, tell Clara yes, she *will* have to write a note if the fan comes back mended.

We couldn't go to Nice to-day—had to give it up, on various accounts—and this was the last chance. I am sorry for Mamma—I wish she could have gone. She got a heavy fall yesterday evening and was pretty stiff and lame this morning, but is working it off trunk packing.

Joseph is gone to Nice to educate himself in Kodacking—and to get the pictures mounted which Mamma thinks she took here ; but I noticed she didn't take the plug out, as a rule. When she did, she took nine pictures on top of each other—composites. With lots of love. PAPA.

In the course of their Italian wanderings they reached Florence, where they were so comfortable and well that they decided to engage a villa for the next winter. Through Prof. Willard Fiske, they discovered the Villa Viviani, near Settignano, an old palace beautifully located on the hilltops east of Florence, commanding a wonderful view of the ancient city. Clemens felt that he could work there, and time proved that he was right.

For the summer, however, they returned to Germany, and located at Bad-Nauheim.

*To Fred J. Hall, in New York :*

Aug. 10, '92.

DEAR MR. HALL,—I have dropped that novel I wrote you about, because I saw a more effective way of using the main episode—to wit : by telling it through the lips of Huck Finn. So I have started Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer (still 15 years old) and their friend the freed slave Jim around the world in a stray *balloon*, with Huck as narrator, and somewhere after the end of that great voyage he will work in the said episode and then nobody will suspect that a whole book has been written and the globe circumnavigated merely to get in that episode in an effective (and at the same time apparently unintentional) way. I have written 12,000 words of this narrative, and find that the humor flows as easily as the adventures and surprises—so I shall go along and make a book of from 50,000 to 100,000 words.

It is a story for boys, of course, and I think will interest any boy between 8 years and 80.

When I was in New York the other day Mrs. Dodge, editor of St. Nicholas, wrote and offered me \$5,000 for (serial right) a story for boys 50,000 words long. I wrote back and declined, for I had other matter in my mind, then.

I conceive that the right way to write a story for boys is to write so that it will not only interest boys but will also strongly interest any man *who has ever been a boy*. That immensely *enlarges the audience*.

Now this story doesn't need to be restricted to a child's magazine—it is proper enough for any magazine, I should think, or for a syndicate. I don't swear it, but I think so.

Proposed title of the story, "New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

[No signature.]

The "novel" mentioned in the foregoing was *The Extraordinary Twins*, a story from which *Pudd'nhead Wilson* would be evolved later. It was wildly extravagant farce—just the sort of thing that now and then Mark Twain plunged into with an enthusiasm that had to work itself out and die a natural death, or mellow into something worth while. *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, as the new Huck story was finally called, was completed and disposed of to *St. Nicholas* for serial publication.

Clemens and family left Bad-Nauheim for Italy by way of Switzerland.

Clemens got well settled down to work presently. He found the situation, the climate, the background, entirely suited to literary production, and in a little while he had accomplished more than at any other time since his arrival in Europe.

*To Mrs. Crane, in Elmira :*

Villa Viviani  
Settignano, Florence.  
Oct 22, '92.

DEAR SUE,—We are getting wonted. The open fires have driven away the cold and the doubt, and now a cheery spirit pervades the place. Livy and the Kings and Made-moiselle have been taking their tea a number of times, lately, on the open terrace with the city and the hills and the sunset for company. I stop work, a few minutes, as a rule, when the sun gets down to the hilltops west of Florence, and join the tea-group to wonder and exclaim. There is always some new miracle in the view, a new and exquisite variation in the show, a variation which occurs every 15 minutes between dawn and night. Once early in the morning, a multitude of white villas not before

perceived, revealed themselves on the far hills; then we recognized that all those great hills are snowed *thick* with them, clear to the summit.

The variety of lovely effects, the infinitude of change, is something not to be believed by any who has not seen it. No view that I am acquainted with in the world is at all comparable to this for delicacy, charm, exquisiteness, dainty coloring, and bewildering rapidity of change. It keeps a person drunk with pleasure all the time. Sometimes Florence ceases to be substantial, and becomes just a faint soft dream, with domes and towers of air, and one is persuaded that he might blow it away with a puff of his breath.

Livy is progressing admirably. This is just the place for her. [Remainder missing.]

The reader may have suspected that young Mr. Hall in New York was having his troubles. He was by this time one-third owner in the business of Charles L. Webster & Co., as well as its general manager. The business had been drained of its capital one way and another—partly by the publication of unprofitable books; partly by the earlier demands of the type-setter, but more than all by the manufacturing cost and agents' commissions demanded by L. A. L.; that is to say, the eleven large volumes constituting the Library of American Literature, which Webster had undertaken to place in a million American homes.

Clemens had faith in Hall and was fond of him. He never found fault with him; he tried to accept his encouraging reports at their face value. He lent the firm every dollar of his literary earnings not absolutely needed for the family's support; he signed new notes; he allowed Mrs. Clemens to put in such remnants of her patrimony as the type-setter had spared. He was not hopeless yet, but he was clearly a good deal disheartened—anxious for freedom.

*To Fred J. Hall, in New York.*

Florence May 30, '93

DEAR MR. HALL,—You were to cable me if you sold any machine royalties—so I judge you have not succeeded.



This has depressed me. I have been looking over the past year's letters and statements and am depressed still more.

I am terribly tired of business. I am by nature and disposition unfitted for it and I want to get out of it. I am standing on the Mount Morris volcano with help from the machine a long way off—doubtless a long way further off than the Connecticut Co. imagines.

Now here is my idea for getting out.

The firm owes Mrs. Clemens and me—I do not know quite how much, but it is about \$170,000 or \$175,000, I suppose (I make this guess from the documents here, whose technicalities confuse me horribly.)

The firm owes other sums, but there is stock and cash assets to cover the entire indebtedness and \$116,679,20 over. Is that it? In addition we have the L. A. L. plates and copyright, worth more than \$130,000—is that correct?

That is to say, we have property worth about \$250,000 above indebtedness, I suppose—or, by one of your estimates, \$300,000? The greater part of the first debts to me is in notes paying 6 percent. The rest (the old \$70,000 or whatever it is) pays no interest.

Now then, will Harper or Appleton, or Putnam give me \$200,000 for those debts and my two-thirds interest in the firm? (The firm of course taking the Mount Morris and all such obligations off my hands and leaving me clear of all responsibility.)

I don't want much money. I only want first class notes—\$200,000 worth of them at 6 per cent, payable *monthly*;—yearly notes, renewable annually for 3 years, with \$5,000 of the principal payable at the beginning and middle of each year. After that, the notes renewable annually and (perhaps) a larger part of the principal payable semi-annually.

Please advise me and suggest alterations and emendations of the above scheme, for I need that sort of help,

being ignorant of business and not able to learn a single detail of it.

Such a deal would make it easy for a big firm to pour in a big cash capital and jump L. A. L. up to enormous prosperity. Then your one-third would be a fortune—and I hope to see that day !

I enclose an authority to use with Whitmore in case you have sold any royalties. But if you can't make this deal don't make any. Wait a little and see if you can't make the deal. Do make the deal if you possibly can. And if my presence shall be necessary in order to complete it I will come over, though I hope it can be done without that.

Get me out of business !

And I will be yours forever gratefully,

S. L. CLEMENS.

My idea is, that I am offering my  $\frac{2}{3}$  of L. A. L. and the business for thirty or forty thousand dollars. Is that it ?

P. S. S. The new firm could retain my books and reduce them to a 10 percent royalty.

S. L. C.

Hall, naturally, did not wish to be left alone with the business. He wrote, therefore, proposing as an alternative that they dispose of the big subscription set that was swamping them. It was a good plan—if it would work—and we find Clemens entering into it heartily.

Those who are old enough to remember the summer of 1893 may recall it as a black financial season. Banks were denying credit, businesses were forced to the wall. It was a poor time to float any costly enterprise. The Chicago company who were trying to build the machines made little progress. The book business everywhere was bad. In a brief note Clemens wrote Hall :

"It is now past the middle of July and no cablegram to say the machine is finished. We are afraid you are having miserable days and worried nights, and we sincerely wish we could relieve you, but it is all black with us and we don't know any helpful thing to say or do."

But soon he could endure the suspense no longer, and on August 29th sailed once more for America. In New York, Clemens settled down at the Players Club, where he could live cheaply, and undertook some literary work while he was casting about for ways and means to relieve the financial situation. Nothing promising occurred, until one night at the Murray Hill Hotel he was introduced by Dr. Clarence C. Rice to Henry H. Rogers, of the Standard Oil group of financiers. Rogers had a keen sense of humour and had always been a great admirer of Mark Twain's work. It was a mirthful evening, and certainly an eventful one in Mark Twain's life. A day or two later Doctor Rice asked the millionaire to interest himself a little in Clemens's business affairs, which he thought a good deal confused. Just what happened is not remembered now, but from the date of the next letter we realize that a discussion of the matter by Clemens and Rogers must have followed pretty promptly.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Europe :*

Oct. 18, '93.

DEAR, DEAR SWEETHEART,—I don't seem to get even half a chance to write you, these last two days, and yet there's lots to say.

Apparently everything is at last settled as to the give-away of L. A. L., and the papers will be signed and the transfer made to-morrow morning.

Meantime I have got the best and wisest man in the whole Standard Oil group of multi-millionaires a good deal interested in looking into the type-setter (this is private, don't mention it.) He has been searching into that thing for three weeks, and yesterday he said to me, "I find the machine to be all you represented it—I have here exhaustive reports from my own experts, and I know every detail of its capacity, its immense value, its construction, cost, history, and all about its inventor's character. I know that the New York Co. and the Chicago Co. are *both* stupid, and that they are unbusinesslike people, destitute of money and in a hopeless boggle."

Then he told me the scheme he had planned, then

said : " If I can arrange with these people on this basis—it will take several weeks to find out—I will see to it that they get the money they need. Then the thing will move right along and your royalties will cease to be waste paper. I will post you the minute my scheme fails or succeeds. In the meantime, *you stop walking the floor*. Go off to the country and try to be gay. You may have to go to walking again, but don't begin till I tell you my scheme has failed." And he added : " Keep me posted always as to where you are—for if I need you and can use you I want to know where to put my hand on you."

If I should even divulge the fact that the Standard Oil is merely *talking* remotely about going into the type-setter, it would send my royalties up.

With worlds and worlds of love and kisses to you all,  
SAML.

With so great a burden of care shifted to the broad financial shoulders of H. H. Rogers, Mark Twain's spirits went ballooning, soaring toward the stars. He awoke, too, to some of the social gaieties about him, and found pleasure in the things that in the hour of his gloom had seemed mainly mockery.

It was decided that Rogers and Clemens should make a trip to Chicago to investigate personally the type-setter situation there.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Paris.*

The Players, Xmas, 1893

. . . We had nice trips, going and coming. Mr. Rogers had telegraphed the Pennsylvania Railroad for a couple of sections for us in the fast train leaving at 2 p. m. the 22nd. The Vice President telegraphed back that every berth was engaged (which was not true—it goes without saying) but that he was sending his own car for us. It was mighty nice and comfortable. In its parlor it had two sofas, which could become beds at night. It had four comfortably-cushioned cane arm-chairs. It had a very nice bedroom with a wide bed in it ; which I said I would

take because I believed I was a little wider than Mr. Rogers—which turned out to be true ; so I took it. It had a darling back-porch—railed, roofed and roomy ; and there we sat, most of the time, and viewed the scenery and talked, for the weather was May weather, and the soft dream-pictures of hill and river and mountain and sky were clear and away beyond anything I have ever seen for exquisiteness and daintiness.

The colored waiter knew his business, and the colored cook was a finished artist. Breakfasts : coffee with real cream ; beefsteaks, sausage, bacon, chops, eggs in various ways, potatoes in various—yes, and quite wonderful *baked* potatoes, and hot as fire. Dinners—all manner of things, including canvas-back duck, apollinaris, claret, champagne, etc.

We sat up chatting till midnight, going and coming ; seldom read a line, day or night, though we were well fixed with magazines, etc. ; then I finished off with a hot Scotch and we went to bed and slept till 9.30 a.m. I honestly tried to pay my share of hotel bills, fees, etc., but I was not allowed—and I knew the reason why, and respected the motive. I will explain when I see you, and then you will understand.

We were 25 hours going to Chicago ; we were there 24 hours ; we were 30 hours returning. Brisk work, but all of it enjoyable. We insisted on leaving the car at Philadelphia so that our waiter and cook (to whom Mr. R. gave \$10 apiece,) could have their Christmas-eve at home. Mr. Rogers's carriage was waiting for us in Jersey City and deposited me at the Players. There—that's all. This letter is to make up for the three letterless days. I love you, dear heart, I love you all.

SAML.

The beginning of the new year found Mark Twain sailing buoyantly on a tide of optimism. He believed that with H. H. Rogers as his financial pilot he could weather safely any storm or stress. He could divert himself, or rest, or work, and

consider his business affairs with interest and amusement, instead of with haggard anxiety. He ran over to Hartford to see an amateur play ; to Boston to give a charity reading ; to Fair Haven to open the library which Mr. Rogers had established there ; he attended gay dinners, receptions, and late studio parties, acquiring the name of the " Belle of New York."

Clemens and Oliver Wendell Holmes had met and become friends soon after the publication of *Innocents Abroad*, in 1869. Now, twenty-five years later, we find a record of what without doubt was their last meeting. It occurred at the home of Mrs. James T. Fields.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Paris :*

Boston, Jan. 25, '94.

Livy darling, I am caught out worse this time than ever before, in the matter of letters. Tuesday morning I was smart enough to finish and mail my long letter to you before breakfast—for I was suspecting that I would not have another spare moment during the day. It turned out just so.

In a thoughtless moment I agreed to come up here and read for the poor. I did not reflect that it would cost me three days. I could not get released. Yesterday I had myself called at 8 and ran out to Mr. Rogers's house at 9, and talked business until half past 10 ; then caught 11 o'clock train and arrived here at 6 ; was shaven and dressed by 7 and ready for dinner here in Mrs. Fields' charming house.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes never goes out now (he is in his 84th year,) but he came out this time—said he wanted to " have a time " once more with me.

Mrs. Fields said Aldrich begged to come and went away crying because she wouldn't let him. She allowed only her family (Sarah Orne Jewett and sister) to be present, because much company would overtax Dr. Holmes.

Well, he was just delightful ! He did as brilliant and beautiful talking (and listening) as ever he did in his life, I guess. Fields and Jewett said he hadn't been in such

splendid form in years. He had ordered his carriage for 9. The coachman sent in for him at 9; but he said, "Oh, nonsense!—leave glories and grandeurs like these? Tell him to go away and come in an hour!"

At 10 he was called for again, and Mrs. Fields, getting uneasy, rose, but he wouldn't go—and so we rattled ahead the same as ever. Twice more Mrs. Fields rose, but he wouldn't go—and he didn't go till half past 10—an unwarrantable dissipation for him in these days. He was prodigiously complimentary about some of my books, and is having Pudd'nhead read to him. I told him you and I used the Autocrat as a courting book and marked it all through, and that you keep it in the sacred green box with the love letters, and it pleased him.

Good-bye, my dear darling, it is 15 minutes to dinner and I'm not dressed yet. I have a reception to-night and will be out very late at that place and at Irving's Theatre where I have a complimentary box. I *wish* you were all here.

SAML.

In the next letter we meet James J. Corbett—"Gentleman Jim," as he was sometimes called—the champion pugilist of that day.

The Howells incident so amusingly dramatized will perhaps be more appreciated if the reader remembers that Mark Twain himself had at intervals been a mind-healing enthusiast. Indeed, in spite of his strictures on Mrs. Eddy, his interest in the subject of mind-cure continued to the end of his life.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Paris :*

Sunday, 9.30 a.m.

Livy dear, when we got out to the house last night, Mrs. Rogers, who is up and around, now, didn't want to go down stairs to dinner, but Mr. R. persuaded her and we had a very good time indeed. By 8 o'clock we were down again and bought a fifteen-dollar box in the Madison Square Garden (Rogers bought it, not I,) then he went and fetched Dr. Rice while I (went) to the Players and

picked up two artists—Reid and Simmons—and thus we filled 5 of the 6 seats. There was a vast multitude of people in the brilliant place. Stanford White came along presently and invited me to go to the World-Champion's dressing room, which I was very glad to do. Corbett has a fine face and is modest and diffident, besides being the most perfectly and beautifully constructed human animal in the world. I said—

“You have whipped Mitchell, and maybe you will whip Jackson in June—but you are not done, then. You will have to tackle me.”

He answered, so gravely that one might easily have thought him in earnest—

“No—I am not going to meet you in the ring. It is not fair or right to require it. You might chance to knock me out, by no merit of your own, but by a purely accidental blow; and then my reputation would be gone and you would have a double one. You have fame enough and you ought not to want to take mine away from me.”

Corbett was for a long time a clerk in the Nevada Bank in San Francisco.

There were lots of little boxing matches, to entertain the crowd: then at last Corbett appeared in the ring and the 8,000 people present went mad with enthusiasm. My two artists went mad about his form. They said they had never seen anything that came reasonably near equaling its perfection except Greek statues, and *they* didn't surpass it.

Corbett boxed 3 rounds with the middle-weight Australian champion—oh, beautiful to see!—then the show was over and we struggled out through a perfect *wash* of humanity. When we reached the street I found I had left my arctics in the box. I had to have them, so Simmons said he would go back and get them, and I didn't dissuade him. I couldn't see how he was going to make his way a single yard into that solid oncoming wave of people—



yet he must plow through it full 50 yards. He was back with the shoes in 3 minutes !

How do you reckon he accomplished that miracle ? By saying—

“ Way, gentlemen, please—coming to fetch Mr. Corbett’s overshoes.”

The word flew from mouth to mouth, the Red Sea divided, and Simmons walked comfortably through and back, dry shod. Simmons (this was revealed to me under seal of secrecy by Reid) is the hero of “ Gwen,” and he and Gwen’s author were once engaged to marry. This is “ fire-escape ” Simmons, the inveterate talker, you know : “ *Exit—in case of Simmons.*”

I had an engagement at a beautiful dwelling close to the Players for 10.30 ; I was there by 10.45. Thirty cultivated and very musical ladies and gentlemen present—all of them acquaintances and many of them personal friends of mine. That wonderful Hungarian Band was there (they charge \$500 for an evening.) Conversation and Band until midnight ; then a bite of supper ; then the company was compactly grouped before me and I told about Dr. E. B. Martin and the etchings, and followed it with the Scotch-Irish Christening. My, but the Martin is a darling story ! Next, the head tenor from the Opera sang half a dozen great songs that set the company wild, yes, mad with delight, that nobly handsome young Damrosch accompanying on the piano.

Just a little pause—then the Band burst out into an explosion of weird and tremendous dance music, a Hungarian celebrity and his wife took the floor.—I followed ; I couldn’t help it ; the others drifted in, one by one, and it was Outeora over again.

By half past 4 I had danced all those people down—and yet was not tired ; merely breathless. I was in bed at 5, and asleep in ten minutes. Up at 9 and presently at work on this letter to you. I think I wrote until 2 or half past. Then I walked leisurely out to Mr. Rogers’s

(it is called 3 miles but it is short of it) arriving at 3.30, but he was out—to return at 5.30—(and a person was *in*, whom I don't particularly like)—so I didn't stay, but dropped over and chatted with the Howellses until 6.

First, Howells and I had a chat together. I asked about Mrs. H. He said she was fine, still steadily improving and nearly back to her old best health. I asked (as if I didn't know):

"What do you attribute this strange miracle to?"

"Mind-cure—simply mind-cure."

"Lord, what a conversion! You were a scoffer three months ago."

"I? I wasn't."

"You were. You made elaborate fun of me in this very room."

"I did *not*, Clemens."

"It's a lie, Howells, you *did*."

I detailed to him the conversation of that time—with the stately argument furnished by Boyesen in the fact that a patient had actually been killed by a mind-curist; and Howells's own smart remark that when the mind-curist is done with you, you *have* to call in a "regular" at last because the former can't procure you a burial permit.

At last he gave in—he said he remembered that talk, but had now been a mind-curist so long it was difficult for him to realize that he had ever been anything else.

Mrs. H. came skipping in, presently, the very person, to a dot, that she used to be, so many years ago.

Mrs. H. said: "People may *call* it what they like, but it is just *hypnotism*, and that's *all* it is—hypnotism pure and simple. Mind-cure!—the *idea*! Why, this woman that cured me hasn't got any mind. She's a good creature, but she's dull and dumb and illiterate and—"

"Now *Eleanor*!"

"I know what I'm talking about!—don't I go there twice a week? And Mr. Clemens, if you could only *see*

her wooden and satisfied face when she snubs me for forgetting myself and showing by a thoughtless remark that *to me* weather is still *weather*, instead of being just an abstraction and a superstition—oh, it's the *funniest* thing you *ever* saw! A-n-d—when she tilts up her nose—well, it's—it's—Well it's that kind of a nose that—”

“Now *Eleanor*!—the woman is not *responsible* for her nose—” and so-on and so-on. It didn't seem to me that I had any right to be having this feast and you not there.

She convinced *me* before she got through, that she and William James are right—hypnotism and mind-cure are the same thing; no difference between them. Very well; the very source, the very *centre* of hypnotism is *Paris*. Dr. Charcot's pupils and disciples are right there and ready to your hand without fetching poor dear old Susy across the stormy sea. Let Mrs. Mackay (to whom I send my best respects) tell you whom to go to to learn all you need to learn and how to proceed. *Do*, do it, honey. Don't lose a minute.

. . . At 11 o'clock last night Mr. Rogers said :

“*I* am able to feel physical fatigue—and *I* feel it now. You never show any, either in your eyes or your movements; do you ever feel any?”

I was able to say that I had forgotten what that feeling was like. Don't you remember how almost impossible it was for me to tire myself at the Villa? Well, it is just so in New York. I go to bed unfatigued at 3, I get up fresh and fine six hours later. I believe I have taken only one daylight nap since I have been here.

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When the anchor is down, then I shall say :

“Farewell—a long farewell—to *business*! I will *never* touch it again!”

I will live in literature, I will wallow in it, revel in it, I will swim in ink! Joan of Arc—but all this is premature; the anchor is not down yet.

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To-morrow (Tuesday) I will add a P. S. if I've any to add ; but, whether or no, I must mail this to morrow, for the mail steamer goes next day.

5.30 *p. m.* Great Scott, *this* is Tuesday ! I must rush this letter into the mail instantly.

Tell that sassy Ben I've got her welcome letter, and I'll write her as soon as I get a daylight chance. I've most time at night, but I'd druther write daytimes. SAML.

The Reid and Simmons mentioned in the foregoing were Robert Reid and Edward Simmons, distinguished painter—the latter a brilliant, fluent, and industrious talker. The title, "Fire-escape Simmons," which Clemens gives him, originated when Oliver Herford, whose quaint wit has so long delighted New-Yorkers, one day pinned up by the back door of the Players the notice : "Exit in case of Simmons." *Gwen*, a popular novel of that day, was written by Blanche Willis Howard.

"Jamie" Dodge, in the next letter, was the son of Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, editor of *St. Nicholas*.

*To Clara Clemens, in Paris :*

Mr. Rogers's Office, Feb. 5, '94.

*Dear Benny*—I was intending to answer your letter to-day, but I am away down town, and will simply whirl together a sentence or two for good-fellowship. I have bought photographs of Coquelin and Jane Hading and will ask them to sign them. I shall meet Coquelin to-morrow night, and if Hading is not present I will send her picture to her by somebody.

I am to breakfast with Madame Nordica in a few days, and meantime I hope to get a good picture of her to sign. She was of the breakfast company yesterday, but the picture of herself which she signed and gave me does not do her majestic beauty justice.

I am too busy to attend to the photo-collecting right, because I have to live up to the name which Jamie Dodge has given me—the "Belle of New York"—and it just

keeps me rushing. Yesterday I had engagements to breakfast at noon, dine at 3, and dine again at 7. I got away from the long breakfast at 2 p.m., went and excused myself from the 3 o'clock dinner, then lunched with Mrs. Dodge in 58th street, returned to the Players and dressed, dined out at 7, and was back at Mrs. Dodge's at 10 p. m. where we had magic-lantern views of a superb sort, and a lot of yarns until an hour after midnight, and got to bed at 2 this morning—a good deal of a gain on my recent hours. But I don't get tired; I sleep as sound as a dead person, and always wake up fresh and strong—usually at exactly 9.

I was at breakfast lately where people of seven separate nationalities sat and the seven languages were going all the time. At my side sat a charming gentleman who was a delightful and active talker, and interesting. He talked glibly to those folks in all those seven languages—and still had a language to spare! I wanted to kill him, for very envy.

I greet you with love and kisses.

PAPA.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Paris :*

Feb.—.

Livy dear, last night I played billiards with Mr. Rogers until 11, then went to Robert Reid's studio and had a most delightful time until 4 this morning. No ladies were invited this time. Among the people present were—

Coquelin; Richard Harding Davis; Harrison, the great out-door painter; Wm. H. Chase, the artist; Bettini, inventor of the new phonograph; Nikola Tesla, the world-wide illustrious electrician; see article about him in Jan. or Feb. Century; John Drew, actor; James Barnes, a marvelous mimic; my, you should see him! Smedley the artist; Zorn the artist; Zogbaum the artist; Reinhart the artist; Metcalf the artist; Ancona, head tenor at the Opera.

Oh, a great lot of others. Everybody there had done something and was in his way famous.

Somebody welcomed Coquelin in a nice little French speech; John Drew did the like for me in English, and then the fun began. Coquelin did some excellent French monologues—one of them an ungrammatical Englishman telling a colorless historiette in French. It nearly killed the fifteen or twenty people who understood it.

I told a yarn, Ancona sang half a dozen songs, Barnes did his darling imitations, Harding Davis sang the hanging of Danny Deever, which was of course good, but he followed it with that most fascinating (for what reason I don't know) of all Kipling's poems, "On the Road to Mandalay," sang it tenderly, and it searched me deeper and charmed me more than the Deever.

Young Gerrit Smith played some ravishing dance-music and we all danced about an hour. There couldn't be a pleasanter night than that one was. Some of those people complained of fatigue but I don't seem to know what the sense of fatigue is.

Coquelin talks quite good English now. He said—

"I have a brother who has the fine mind—ah, a charming and delicate fancy, and he knows your writings so well, and loves them—and that is the same with me. It will *stir* him so when I write and tell him I have seen you!"

Wasn't that nice? We talked a good deal together. He is as winning as his own face. But he wouldn't sign that photograph for Clara. "*That?*" No! She shall have a better one. I will send it to you."

He is much driven, and will forget it, but Reid has promised to get the picture for me, and I will try and keep him reminded.

Oh, dear, my time is all used up and your letters are not answered.

Mama, dear, I don't go everywhere—I decline most things. But there are plenty that I can't well get out of.

I will remember what you say and not make my yarning too common.

I am so glad Susy has gone on that trip and that you are trying the electric. May you both prosper. For you are mighty dear to me and in my thoughts always.

SAML.

The affairs of the Webster Publishing Company were by this time getting into a very serious condition indeed. The effects of the panic of the year before could not be overcome. Creditors were pressing their claims and profits were negligible.

*To Mrs. Clemens, in Paris :*

The Players, Feb. 15, '94. 11.30 p.m.

Livy darling, Yesterday I talked all my various matters over with Mr. Rogers and we decided that it would be safe for me to leave here the 7th of March, in the New York. So his private secretary, Miss Harrison, wrote and ordered a berth for me and then I lost no time in cabling you that I should reach Southampton March 14, and Paris the 15th. Land, but it made my pulses leap, to think I was going to see you again ! . . . One thing at a time. I never fully laid Webster's disastrous condition before Mr. Rogers until to-night after billiards. I did hate to burden his good heart and over-worked head with it, but he took hold with avidity and said it was no burden to work for his friends, but a pleasure. We discussed it from various standpoints, and found it a sufficiently difficult problem to solve ; but he thinks that after he has slept upon it and thought it over he will know what to suggest.

You must not think I am ever rude with Mr. Rogers, I am not. He is not common clay, but fine—fine and delicate—and that sort do not call out the coarsenesses that are in my sort. I am never afraid of wounding him ; I do not need to watch myself in that matter. The sight of him is peace.

He wants to go to Japan—it is his dream ; wants to go with me—which means, the two families—and hear no more about business for awhile, and have a rest. And he needs it. But it is like all the dreams of all busy men—fated to remain dreams.

You perceive that he is a pleasant text for me. It is easy to write about him. When I arrived in September, lord how black the prospect was—how desperate, how incurably desperate ! Webster and Co. had to have a small sum of money or go under at once. I flew to Hartford—to my friends—but they were not moved, not strongly interested, and I was ashamed that I went. It was from Mr. Rogers, a stranger, that I got the money and was by it saved. And then—while still a stranger—he set himself the task of saving my financial life without putting upon me (in his native delicacy) any sense that I was the recipient of a charity, a benevolence—and he has accomplished that task ; accomplished it at a cost of three months of wearing and difficult labor. He gave that time to me—time which could not be bought by any man at a hundred thousand dollars a month—no, nor for three times the money.

Well, in the midst of that great fight, that long and admirable fight, George Warner came to me and said—

“ There is a splendid chance open to you. I know a man—a prominent man—who has written a book that will go like wildfire ; a book that arraigns the Standard Oil fiends, and gives them unmitigated hell, individual by individual. It is the very book for you to publish ; there is a fortune in it, and I can put you in communication with the author.”

I *wanted* to say—

“ The only man *I* care for in the world ; the only man I would give a *damn* for ; the only man who is lavishing his sweat and blood to save me and mine from starvation and shame, is a Standard Oil fiend. If you know me, you know whether I want the book or not.”



But I didn't say that. I said I didn't want *any* book ; I wanted to get out of the publishing business and out of *all* business, and was here for that purpose and would accomplish it if I could.

But there's enough. I shall be asleep by 3, and I don't need much sleep, because I am never drowsy or tired these days. Dear, dear Susy—my strength reproaches me when I think of her and you, my darling.

SAML.

But even so able a man as Henry Rogers could not accomplish the impossible. The affairs of the Webster Company were hopeless, the business was not worth saving. By Mr. Rogers's advice an assignment was made April 18, 1894. After its early spectacular success less than ten years had brought the business to failure. The publication of the Grant memoirs had been its only great achievement.

Clemens sailed for Europe as soon as his affairs would permit him to go. He must get settled where he could work comfortably. Type-setter prospects seemed promising, but meantime there was need of funds.

In August we find him writing to Mr. Rogers from Etretat, a little Norman watering-place. The reader may remember that Clemens had written the first half of his *Joan of Arc* book at the Villa Viviani, in Florence, nearly two years before. He had closed the manuscript then with the taking of Orleans, and was by no means sure that he would continue the story beyond that point.

Rouen, where Joan met her martyrdom, was only a short distance away, and they halted there *en route* to Paris, where they had arranged to spend the winter. The health of Susy Clemens was not good, and they lingered in Rouen while Clemens explored the old city and incidentally did some writing of another sort. In a note to Mr. Rogers he said : "To put in my odd time I am writing some articles about Paul Bourget and his *Outre-Mer* chapters—laughing at them and at some of our oracular owls who find them important. What the hell makes them important, I should like to know !"

He was still at Rouen two weeks later and had received encouraging news from Rogers concerning the type-setter, which had been placed for trial in the office of the *Chicago Herald*. Clemens wrote : "I can hardly keep from sending a hurrah by cable. I would certainly do it if I wasn't superstitious." His restraint, though wise, was wasted—the end was near.

*To H. H. Rogers, in New York :*

169 Rue de l'Université,  
Paris, Dec. 22, '94.

DEAR MR. ROGERS,—I *seemed* to be entirely expecting your letter, and also prepared and resigned ; but Lord, it shows how little we know ourselves and how easily we can deceive ourselves. It hit me like a thunder-clap. It knocked every rag of sense out of my head, and I went flying here and there and yonder, not knowing what I was doing, and only one clearly defined thought standing up visible and substantial out of the crazy storm-drift—that my dream of ten years was in desperate peril, and out of the 60,000 or 70,000 projects for its rescue that came floating through my skull, not one would hold still long enough for me to examine it and size it up. Have you ever been like that ? Not so much so, I reckon.

There was another clearly defined idea—I must be there and see it die. That is, if it must die ; and maybe if I were there we might hatch up some next-to-impossible way to make it take up its bed and take a walk.

So, at the end of four hours I started, still whirling and walked over to the rue Scribe—4 P. M.—and asked a question or two and was told I should be running a big risk if I took the 9 P. M. train for London and Southampton ; “better come right along at 6.52 per Havre special and step aboard the New York all easy and comfortable.” Very ! and I about two miles from home, with no packing done.

Then it occurred to me that none of these salvation-notions that were whirl-winding through my head could be examined or made available unless at least a month's time could be secured. So I cabled you, and said to myself that I would take the French steamer tomorrow (which will be Sunday).

By bedtime Mrs. Clemens had reasoned me into a fairly rational and contented state of mind ; but of course it didn't last long. So I went on thinking—mixing it

with a smoke in the dressing room once an hour—until dawn this morning. Result—a sane resolution ; no matter what your answer to my cable might be, I would hold still and not sail until I should get an answer to this present letter which I am now writing, or a cable answer from you saying “Come,” or “Remain.”

I have slept 6 hours, my pond has clarified, and I find the sediment of my 70,000 projects to be of this character :

[Several pages of suggestions for reconstructing the machine follow.]

Don't say I'm wild. For really I'm sane again this morning. . . .

With love,      S. L. CLEMENS.

*To H. H. Rogers, in New York :*

169 Rue de l'Université,  
Paris, Dec. 27, '94.

DEAR MR. ROGERS,—Notwithstanding your heart is “old and hard,” you make a body choke up. I *know* you “mean every word you say” and I do take it “in the same spirit in which you tender it.” I shall keep your regard while we two live—that I know ; for I shall always remember what you have done for me, and that will insure me against ever doing anything that could forfeit it or impair it. I am 59 years old ; yet I never had a friend before who put out a hand and tried to pull me ashore when he found me in deep waters.

It is six days or seven days ago that I lived through that despairing day, and then through a night without sleep ; then settled down next day into my right mind (or thereabouts), and wrote you. I put in the rest of that day till 7 p. m. plenty comfortably enough writing a long chapter of my book ; then went to a masked ball blacked up as Uncle Remus, taking Clara along ; and we had a good time. I have lost no day since and suffered no discom-

fort to speak of, but drove my troubles out of my mind and had good success in keeping them out—through watchfulness. I have done a good week's work and put the book a good way ahead in the Great Trial, which is the difficult part which requires the most thought and carefulness. I cannot see the end of the Trial yet, but I am on the road. I am creeping surely toward it.

"Why not leave them all to me." My business bothers ? I take you by the hand ! I jump at the chance ! . . .

P.S. Madam says *No*, I must face the music. So I enclose my effort—to be used if you approve, but not otherwise.

There ! Now if you will alter it to suit your judgment and bang away, I shall be eternally obliged.

We shall try to find a tenant for our Hartford house ; not an easy matter, for it costs heavily to live in. We can never live in it again ; though it would break the family's hearts if they could believe it.

Nothing daunts Mrs. Clemens or makes the world look black to her—which is the reason I haven't drowned myself.

We all send our deepest and warmest greetings to you and all of yours and a Happy New Year !

S. L. CLEMENS.

*To H. H. Rogers, in New York City :*

[No date.]

DEAR MR. ROGERS,—Yours of Dec. 21 has arrived, containing the circular to stockholders and I guess the Co. will really quit—there doesn't seem to be any other wise course.

There's one thing which makes it difficult for me to soberly realize that my ten year dream is actually dissolved ; and that is, that it reverses my horoscope. The proverb says, "Born lucky, *always* lucky," and I am very

superstitious. As a small boy I was notoriously lucky. It was usual for one or two of our lads (per annum) to get drowned in the Mississippi or in Bear Creek, but I was pulled out in a  $\frac{2}{3}$  drowned condition 9 times before I learned to swim, and was considered to be a cat in disguise. When the "Pennsylvania" blew up and the telegraph reported my brother as fatally injured (with 60 others) but made no mention of me, my uncle said to my mother "It means that Sam was somewhere else, after being on that boat a year and a half—he was born lucky." Yes, I *was* somewhere else. I am so superstitious that I have always been afraid to have business dealings with certain relatives and friends of mine because they were unlucky people. All my life I have stumbled upon lucky chances of large size, and whenever they were wasted it was because of my own stupidity and carelessness. And so I have felt entirely certain that that machine would turn up trumps eventually. It disappointed me lots of times, but I couldn't shake off the confidence of a life-time in my luck.

Well, whatever I get out of the wreckage will be due to good luck—the good luck of getting you into the scheme—for, but for that, there wouldn't be any wreckage; it would *be* total loss.

I wish you had been in at the beginning. Then we should have had the good luck to step promptly ashore.

Miss Harrison has had a dream which promises me a large bank account, and I want her to go ahead and dream it twice more, so as to make the prediction sure to be fulfilled.

I've got a first rate subject for a book. It kept me awake all night, and I began it and completed it in my mind. The minute I finish Joan I will take it up.

Love and Happy New Year to you all.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

This was about the end of the machine interests so far as Clemens was concerned. Paige succeeded in getting some new people interested, but nothing important happened, or that in any way affected Mark Twain. Characteristically he put the whole matter behind him and plunged into his work, facing comparative poverty and a burden of debts with a stout heart. The beginning of the new year found him really poorer in purse than he had ever been in his life, but certainly not crushed, or even discouraged—at least, not permanently—and never more industrious or capable.

In February Clemens returned to New York to look after matters connected with his failure and to close arrangements for a reading-tour around the world. He was nearly sixty years old, and time had not lessened his loathing for the platform. More than once, however, in earlier years, he had turned to it as a debt-payer, and never yet had his burden been so great as now. He concluded arrangements with Major Pond to take him as far as the Pacific Coast, and with R. S. Smythe, of Australia, for the rest of the tour.

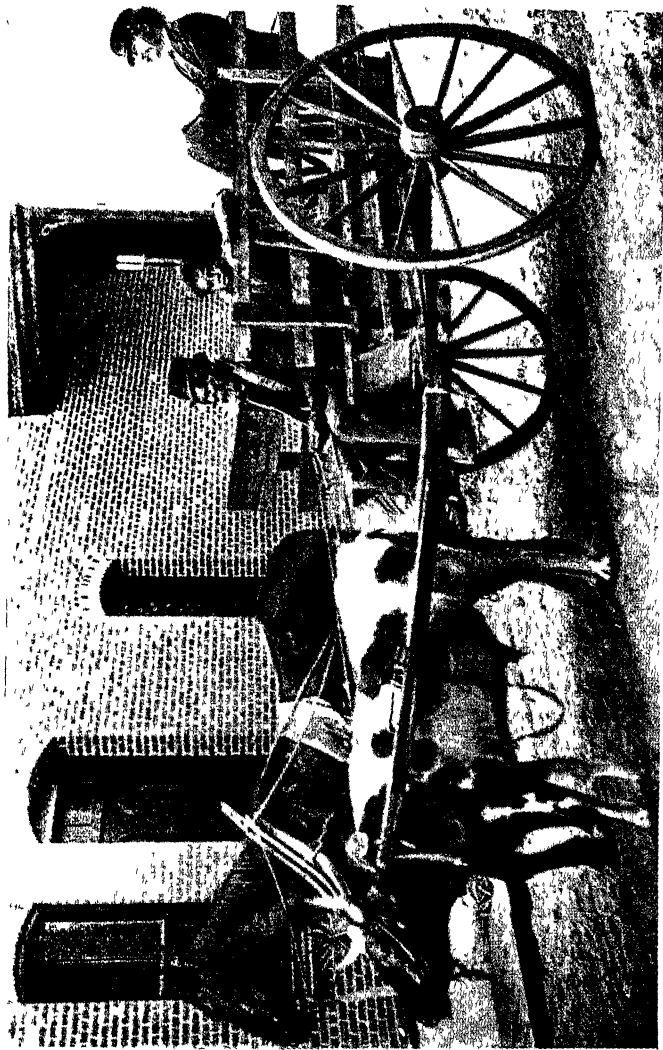
Mark Twain, on this long tour, was accompanied by his wife and his daughter Clara—Susy and Jean Clemens remaining with their aunt at Quarry Farm. The tour was a financial success from the start. By the time they were ready to sail from Vancouver five thousand dollars had been remitted to Mr. Rogers against that day of settlement when the debts of Webster & Co. were to be paid. Perhaps it should be stated here that a legal settlement had been arranged on a basis of fifty cents on the dollar, but neither Clemens nor his wife consented to this as final. They would pay in full.

They sailed from Vancouver August 23, 1895. About the only letter of this time is an amusing note to Rudyard Kipling, written at the moment of departure.

*To Rudyard Kipling, in England :*

August, 1895.

DEAR KIPLING,—It is reported that you are about to visit India. This has moved me to journey to that far country in order that I may unload from my conscience a debt long due to you. Years ago you came from India to Elmira to visit me, as you said at the time. It has always been my purpose to return that visit and that great compliment some day. I shall arrive next January



MARK TWAIN ON HIS TRIP ROUND THE WORLD  
A tick photograph made from two negatives





and you must be ready. I shall come riding my ayah with his tusks adorned with silver bells and ribbons and escorted by a troop of native howdahs richly clad and mounted upon a herd of wild bungalows; and you must be on hand with a few bottles of ghee, for I shall be thirsty.

Affectionately,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Clemens, platforming in Australia, was too busy to write letters. Everywhere he was welcomed by great audiences, and everywhere lavishly entertained.

*To Rev. Jos. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Pretoria, South African Republic,  
The Queen's Birthday, '96.  
(May 24)

DEAR OLD JOE,—Harper for May was given to me yesterday in Johannesburg by an American lady who lives there, and I read your article on me while coming up in the train with her and an old friend and fellow-Missourian of mine, Mrs. John Hays Hammond, the handsome and spirited wife of the chief of the 4 Reformers, who lies in prison here under a 15-year sentence, along with 50 minor Reformers who are in for 1 and 5-year terms. Thank you a thousand times, Joe, you have praised me away above my deserts, but I am not the man to quarrel with you for *that*; and as for Livy, she will take your very hardest statements at par, and be grateful to you to the bottom of her heart. Between you and Punch and Brander Matthews, I am like to have my opinion of myself raised sufficiently high; and I guess the children will be after you, for it is the study of their lives to keep my self-appreciation down somewhere within bounds.

I had a note from Mrs. Rev. Gray (née Tyler) yesterday, and called on her to-day. She is well.

Yesterday I was allowed to enter the prison with Mrs. Hammond. A Boer guard was at my elbow all the time, but was courteous and polite, only he barred the way in the compound (quadrangle or big open court) and wouldn't let me cross a white mark that was on the ground—the "death-line" one of the prisoners called it. Not in earnest, though, I think. I found that I had met Hammond once when he was a Yale senior and a guest of Gen. Franklin's. I also found that I had known Capt. Mein intimately 32 years ago. One of the English prisoners had heard me lecture in London 23 years ago. After being introduced in turn to all the prisoners, I was allowed to see some of the cells and examine their food, beds, etc. I was told in Johannesburg that Hammond's salary of \$150,000 a year is not stopped, and that the salaries of some of the others are still continued. Hammond was looking very well indeed, and I can say the same of all the others. When the trouble first fell upon them it hit some of them very hard; several fell sick (Hammond among them), two or three had to be removed to the hospital, and one of the favorites lost his mind and killed himself, poor fellow, last week. His funeral, with a sorrowing following of 10,000, took the place of the public demonstration the Americans were getting up for me.

These prisoners are strong men, prominent men, and I believe they are all educated men. They are well off; some of them are wealthy. They have a lot of books to read, they play games and smoke, and for awhile they will be able to bear up in their captivity; but not for long, not for very long, I take it. I am told they have times of deadly brooding and depression. I made them a speech—sitting down. It just happened so. I don't prefer that attitude. Still, it has one advantage—it is only a *talk*, it doesn't take the form of a speech. I have tried it once before on this trip. However, if a body wants to make sure of having "liberty," and feeling at home, he had better stand up, of course. I advised them at considerable

length to stay where they were—they would get used to it and like it presently ; if they got out they would only get in again somewhere else, by the look of their countenances ; and I promised to go and see the President and do what I could to get him to double their jail-terms.

We had a very good sociable time till the permitted time was up and a little over, and we outsiders had to go. I went again to-day, but the Rev. Mr. Gray had just arrived, and the warden, a genial, elderly Boer named Du Plessis, explained that his orders wouldn't allow him to admit saint and sinner at the same time, particularly on a Sunday. Du Plessis—descended from the Huguenot fugitives, you see, of 200 years ago—but he hasn't any French left in him now—all Dutch.

It gravels me to think what a goose I was to make Livy and Clara remain in Durban ; but I wanted to save them the 30-hour railway trip to Johannesburg. And Durban and its climate and opulent foliage were so lovely, and the friends there were so choice and so hearty that I sacrificed myself in their interests, as I thought. It is just the beginning of winter, and although the days are hot, the nights are cool. But it's lovely weather in these regions, too ; and the friends are as lovely as the weather, and Johannesburg and Pretoria are brimming with interest. I talk here twice more, then return to Johannesburg next Wednesday for a fifth talk there ; then to the Orange Free State capital, then to some town on the way to Port Elizabeth, where the two will join us by sea from Durban ; then the gang will go to Kimberley and presently to the Cape—and so, in the course of time, we shall get through and sail for England ; and then we will hunt up a quiet village and I will write and Livy edit, for a few months, while Clara and Susy and Jean study music and things in London.

We have had noble good times everywhere and every day, from Cleveland, July 15, to Pretoria, May 24, and never a dull day either on sea or land, notwithstanding

the carbuncles and things. Even when I was laid up 10 days at Jeypore in India we had the charmingest times with English friends. All over India the English—well, you will never know how good and fine they are till you see them.

Midnight and after ! and I must do many things to-day, and lecture to-night.

A world of thanks to you, Joe dear, and a world of love to all of you.

MARK.

The Clemens party sailed from South Africa the middle of July, 1896, and on the last day of the month reached England. They had not planned to return to America, but to spend the winter in or near London in some quiet place where Clemens could write the book of his travels.

The two daughters in America, Susy and Jean, were expected to arrive August 12th, but on that day there came, instead, a letter saying that Susy Clemens was not well enough to sail. A cable inquiry was immediately sent, but the reply when it came was not satisfactory, and Mrs. Clemens and Clara sailed for America without further delay. This was on August 15th. Three days later, in the old home at Hartford, Susy Clemens died of cerebral fever. She had been visiting Mrs. Charles Dudley Warner, but by the physician's advice had been removed to the comfort and quiet of her own home, only a few steps away.

Mark Twain, returning from his triumphant tour of the world in the hope that soon, now, he might be free from debt, with his family happily gathered about him, had to face alone this cruel blow. There was no purpose in his going to America ; Susy would be buried long before his arrival. He awaited in England the return of his broken family. They lived that winter in a quiet corner of Chelsea, No. 23 Tedworth Square.

*To Rev. Joseph H. Twichell, in Hartford, Conn. :*

Permanent address :

c/o Chatto & Windus

111, St. Martin's Lane, London,

Sept. 27, '96

Through Livy and Katy I have learned, dear old Joe, how loyally you stood poor Susy's friend, and mine, and Livy's : how you came all the way down, twice, from your

summer refuge on your merciful errands to bring the peace and comfort of your beloved presence, first to that poor child, and again to the broken heart of her poor desolate mother. It was like you; like your good great heart, like your matchless and unmatchable self. It was no surprise to me to learn that you stayed by Susy long hours, careless of fatigue and heat, it was no surprise to me to learn that you could still the storms that swept her spirit when no other could; for she loved you, revered you, trusted you, and "Uncle Joe" was no empty phrase upon her lips! I am grateful to you, Joe, grateful to the bottom of my heart, which has always been filled with love for you, and respect and admiration; and I would have chosen you out of all the world to take my place at Susy's side and Livy's in those black hours.

Susy was a rare creature; the rarest that has been reared in Hartford in this generation. And Livy knew it, and you knew it, and Charley Warner and George, and Harmony, and the Hillyers and the Dunhams and the Cheneys, and Susy and Lilly, and the Bunces, and Henry Robinson and Dick Burton, and perhaps others. And I also was of the number, but not in the same degree—for she was above my duller comprehension. I merely knew that she was my superior in fineness of mind, in the delicacy and subtlety of her intellect, but to fully measure her I was not competent. I know her better now; for I have read her private writings and sounded the deeps of her mind; and I know better, now, the treasure that was mine than I knew it when I had it. But I have this consolation; that dull as I was, I always knew enough to be proud when she commended me or my work—as proud as if Livy had done it herself—and I took it as the accolade from the hand of genius. I see now—as Livy always saw—that she had greatness in her; and that she herself was dimly conscious of it.

And now she is dead—and I can never tell her.

God bless you Joe—and all of your house. S. L. C.

*Following the Equator* did not finish easily, and more than once when he thought it completed he found it necessary to cut and add and change. The final chapters were not sent to the printer until the middle of May, and in a letter to Mr. Rogers he commented: "A successful book is not made of what is in it, but what is left out of it." Clemens was at the time contemplating a uniform edition of his books, and in one of his letters to Mr. Rogers on the matter he wrote, whimsically, "Now *I* was proposing to make a thousand sets at a hundred dollars a set, and do the whole canvassing *myself*. . . . I would load up every important jail and saloon in America with deluxe editions of my books. But Mrs. Clemens and the children object to this, I do not know why." And, in a moment of depression: "You see the lightning refuses to strike me—there is where the defect is. We have to do our own striking as Barney Barnato did. But nobody ever gets the courage until he goes crazy."

They went to Switzerland for the summer to the village of Weggis, on Lake Lucerne—"The charmingest place we ever lived in," he declared, "for repose, and restfulness, and superb scenery." It was here that he began work on a new story of Tom and Huck, and at least upon one other manuscript.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Lucerne, Aug. 22, '97.

DEAR JOE,—Livvy made a noble find on the Lucerne boat the other day on one of her shopping trips—George Williamson Smith—did I tell you about it? We had a lovely time with him, and such intellectual refreshment as we had not tasted in many a month.

And the other night we had a detachment of the Jubilee Singers—6. I had known one of them in London 24 years ago. Three of the 6 were born in slavery, the others were children of slaves. How charming they were—in spirit, manner, language, pronunciation, enunciation, grammar, phrasing, matter, carriage, clothes—in every detail that goes to make the real lady and gentleman, and welcome guest. We went down to the village hotel and bought our tickets and entered the beer-hall, where a crowd of German and Swiss men and women sat grouped at round

tables with their beer mugs in front of them—self-contained and unimpressible looking people, an indifferent and unposted and disheartened audience—and up at the far end of the room sat the Jubilees in a row. The Singers got up and stood—the talking and glass jingling went on. Then rose and swelled out above those common earthly sounds one of those rich chords the secret of whose make only the Jubilees possess, and a spell fell upon that house. It was fine to see the faces light up with the pleased wonder and surprise of it. No one was indifferent any more; and when the singers finished, the camp was theirs. It was a triumph. It reminded me of Launcelot riding in Sir Kay's armor and astonishing complacent Knights who thought they had struck a soft thing. The Jubilees sang a lot of pieces. Arduous and painstaking cultivation has not diminished or artificialized their music, but on the contrary—to my surprise—has mightily reinforced its eloquence and beauty. Away back in the beginning—to my mind—their music made all other vocal music cheap; and that early notion is emphasized now, It is utterly beautiful, to me; and it moves me infinitely more than any other music can. I think that in the Jubilees and their songs America has produced the perfectest flower of the ages; and I wish it were a foreign product, so that she would worship it and lavish money on it and go properly crazy over it.

Now, these countries are different: they would do all that, if it were *native*. It is true they praise God, but that is merely a formality, and nothing in it; they open out their whole hearts to no foreigner.

The musical critics of the German press praise the Jubilees with great enthusiasm—acquired technique, etc. included.

One of the Jubilee men is a son of General Joe Johnson, and was educated by him after the war. The party came up to the house and we had a pleasant time.

This is paradise, here—but of course we have got to

leave it by and by. The 18th of August <sup>1</sup> has come and gone, Joe—and we still seem to live.

With love from us all. MARK.

*Following the Equator* was issued by subscription through Mark Twain's old publishers, the Bliss, of Hartford. The sale of it was large, not only on account of the value of the book itself, but also because of the sympathy of the American people with Mark Twain's brave struggle to pay his debts. When the newspapers began to print exaggerated stories of the vast profits that were piling up, Bliss became worried, for he thought it would modify the sympathy. He cabled Clemens for a denial, with the following result :

*To Frank E. Bliss, in Hartford :*

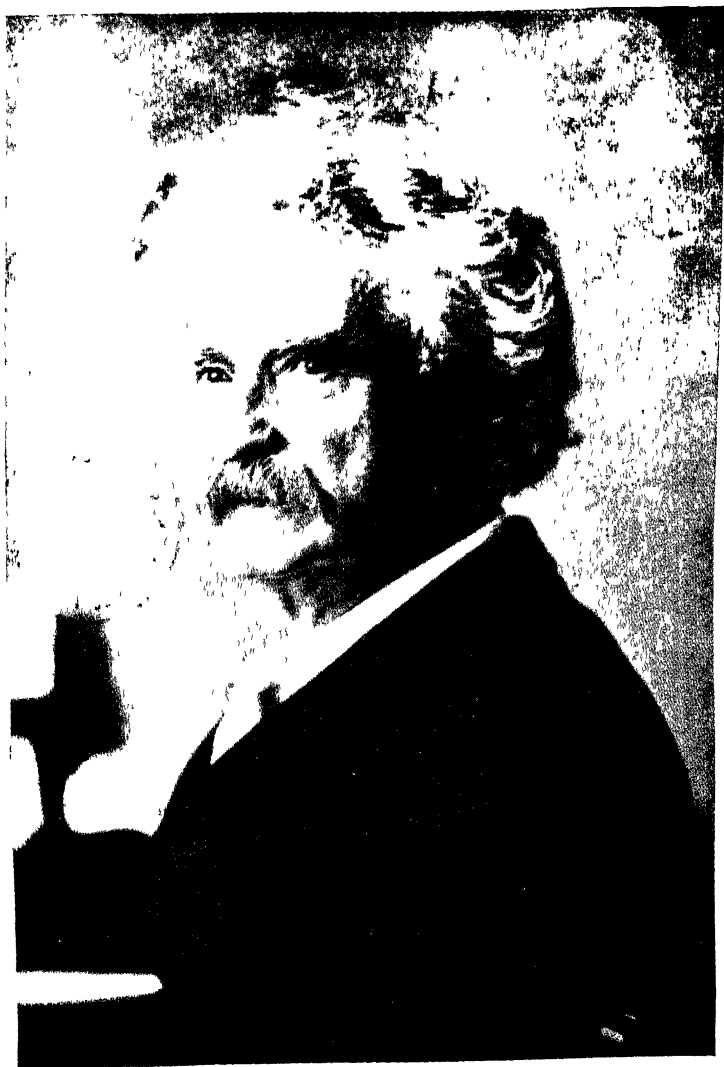
Vienna, Nov. 4, 1897.

DEAR BLISS,—Your cablegram informing me that a report is in circulation which purports to come from me and which says I have recently made \$82,000 and paid all my debts has just reached me, and I have cabled back my regret to you that it is not true. I wrote a letter—a private letter—a short time ago, in which I expressed the belief that I should be out of debt within the next twelvemonth. If you make as much as usual for me out of the book, that belief will crystallize into a fact, and I shall be wholly out of debt. I am encoring you now.

It is out of that moderate letter that the Eighty-Two-Thousand-Dollar mare's nest has developed. But why do you worry about the various reports? They do not worry me. They are not unfriendly, and I don't see how they can do any harm. Be patient; you have but a little while to wait; the possible reports are nearly all in. It has been reported that I was seriously ill—it was another man; dying—it was another man; dead—the other man again. It has been reported that I have received a legacy—it was another man; that I am out of debt—it was another man; and now comes this \$82,000—still another man. It

<sup>1</sup> Anniversary of Susy Clemens's death.





MARK TWAIN IN 1896



has been reported that I am writing books—for publication ; I am not doing anything of the kind. It would surprise (and gratify) me if I should be able to get another book ready for the press within the next three years. You can see, yourself, that there isn't anything more to be reported—invention is exhausted. Therefore, don't worry, Bliss—the long night is breaking. As far as I can see, nothing remains to be reported, except that I have become a foreigner. When you hear it, don't you believe it. And don't you take the trouble to deny it. Merely just raise the American flag on our house in Hartford, and let it talk.

Truly yours,

MARK TWAIN.

P. S. This is not a private letter. I am getting tired of private letters.

The end of January saw the payment of the last of Mark Twain's debts. Once more he stood free before the world—a world that sounded his praises. The latter fact rather amused him. "Honest men must be pretty scarce," he said, "when they make so much fuss over even a defective specimen." When the end was in sight Clemens wrote the news to Howells in a letter as full of sadness as of triumph.

*To W. D. Howells, in New York :*

Hotel Metropole,  
Vienna, Jan. 22, '98.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Look at those ghastly figures. I used to write it "Hartford, 1871." There was no Susy then—there is no Susy now. And how much lies between—one long lovely stretch of scented fields, and meadows, and shady woodlands, and suddenly Sahara ! You speak of the glorious days of that old time—and they were. It is my quarrel—that traps like that are set. Susy and Winnie given us, in miserable sport, and then taken away.

About the last time I saw you I described to you the culminating disaster in a book I was going to write (and

will yet, when the stroke is further away)—a man's dead daughter brought to him when he had been through all other possible misfortunes—and I said it couldn't be done as it ought to be done except by a man who had lived it—it must be written with the blood out of a man's heart. I couldn't know, then, how soon I was to be made competent. I have thought of it many a time since. If you were here I think we could cry down each other's necks, as in your dream. For we *are* a pair of old derelicts drifting around, now, with some of our passengers gone and the sunniness of the others in eclipse.

I couldn't get along without work now. I bury myself in it up to the ears. Long hours—8 and 9 on a stretch, sometimes. And all the days, Sundays included. It isn't all for print, by any means, for much of it fails to suit me; 50,000 words of it in the past year. It was because of the deadness which invaded me when Susy died. But I have made a change lately—into dramatic work—and I find it absorbingly entertaining. I don't know that I can write a play that will play: but no matter, I'll write half a dozen that won't, anyway. Dear me, I didn't know there was such fun in it. I'll write twenty that won't play. I get into immense spirits as soon as my day is fairly started. Of course a good deal of this friskiness comes of my being in sight of land—on the Webster & Co. debts, I mean. (Private.) We've lived close to the bone and saved every cent we could, and there's no undisputed claim, now, that we can't cash. I have marked this "private" because it is for the friends who are attending to the matter for us in New York to reveal it when they want to and if they want to. There are only two claims which I dispute and which I mean to look into personally before I pay them. But they are small. Both together they amount to only \$12,500. I hope you will never get the like of the load saddled onto you that was saddled onto me 3 years ago. And yet there is such a solid pleasure in *paying* the things that I reckon maybe it is worth while

to get into that kind of a hobble, after all. Mrs. Clemens gets millions of delight out of it; and the children have never uttered one complaint about the scrimping, from the beginning.

We all send you and all of you our love.

MARK.

Howells wrote: "I wish you could understand how unshaken you are, you old tower, in every way; your foundations are struck so deep that you will catch the sunshine of immortal years, and bask in the same light as Cervantes and Shakespeare."

The Clemens apartments at the Métropole became a sort of social clearing-house of the Viennese art and literary life, much more like an embassy than the home of a mere literary man. Wherever Mark Twain appeared in public he was a central figure.

(Private)

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:*

Hotel Metropole,  
Vienna, Feb. 3, '98.

DEAR JOE,—There's that letter that I began so long ago—you see how it is: can't get time to finish anything. I pile up lots of work, nevertheless. There may be idle people in the world, but I'm not one of them. I say "Private" up there because I've got an adventure to tell, and you mustn't let a breath of it get out. First I thought I would lay it up along with a thousand others that I've laid up for the same purpose—to talk to you about, but—those others have vanished out of my memory; and that must not happen with this.

The other night I lectured for a Vienna charity; and at the end of it Livy and I were introduced to a princess who is aunt to the heir apparent of the imperial throne—a beautiful lady, with a beautiful spirit, and very cordial in her praises of my books and thanks to me for writing them; and glad to meet me face to face and shake me by the hand—just the kind of princess that adorns a fairy tale and makes it the prettiest tale there is.

Very well, we long ago found that when you are noticed by supremacies, the correct etiquette is to go, within a couple of days, and pay your respects in the quite simple form of writing your name in the Visitors' Book kept in the office of the establishment. That is the end of it, and everything is squared up and ship-shape.

So at noon to-day Livy and I drove to the Archducal palace, and got by the sentries all right, and asked the grandly-uniformed porter for the book and said we wished to write our names in it. And he called a servant in livery and was sending us up stairs; and said her Royal Highness was out but would soon be in. Of course Livy said "No—no—we only want the book;" but he was firm, and said, "You are Americans?"

"Yes."

"Then you are expected, please go up stairs."

"But indeed we are not expected—please let us have the book and—"

"Her Royal Highness will be back in a *very* little while—she commanded me to *tell* you so—and you must wait."

Well, the soldiers were there close by—there was no use trying to resist—so we followed the servant up; but when he tried to beguile us into a drawing-room, Livy drew the line; she wouldn't go in. And she wouldn't stay up there, either. She said the princess might come in at any moment and catch us, and it would be too infernally ridiculous for anything. So we went down stairs again—to my unspeakable regret. For it was too darling a comedy to spoil. I was hoping and praying the princess would come, and catch us up there, and that those other Americans who *were* expected would arrive, and be taken for impostors by the portier, and shot by the sentinels—and then it would all go into the papers, and be cabled all over the world, and make an immense stir and be perfectly lovely. And by that time the princess would discover that *we* were not the right ones, and the Minister of War would

be ordered out, and the garrison, and they would come for us, and there would be another prodigious time, and *that* would get cabled too, and—well, Joe, I was in a state of perfect bliss. But happily, oh, so happily, that big portier wouldn't let us out—he was sorry, but he must obey orders—we must go back up stairs and wait. Poor Livy—I couldn't help but enjoy her distress. She said we were in a fix, and how *were* we going to explain, if the princess should arrive before the rightful Americans came? We went up stairs again—laid off our wraps, and were conducted through one drawing room and into another, and left alone there and the door closed upon us.

Livy was in a state of mind! She said it was too theatrically ridiculous; and that I would never be able to keep my mouth shut; that I would be sure to let it out and it would get into the papers—and she tried to make me promise—“Promise *what*?” I said—“to be quiet about this? Indeed I won't—it's the best thing that ever happened; I'll tell it, and add to it; and I wish Joe and Howells were here to make it perfect; I can't make all the rightful blunders myself—it takes all three of us to do justice to an opportunity like this. I would just like to see Howells get down to his work and explain, and lie, and work his futile and inventionless subterfuges when that princess comes raging in here and wanting to *know*.” But Livy could not hear fun—it was not a time to be trying to be funny—we were in a most miserable and shameful situation, and if—

Just then the door spread wide and our princess and 4 more, and 3 little princes flowed in! Our princess, and her sister the Archduchess Marie Thérèse (mother to the imperial Heir and to the young girl Archduchesses present, and aunt to the 3 little princes)—and we shook hands all around and sat down and had a most sociable good time for half-an hour—and by and by it turned out that we *were* the right ones, and had been sent for by a messenger who started too late to catch us at the hotel. We were

invited for 2 o'clock, but we beat that arrangement by an hour and a half.

Wasn't it a rattling good comedy situation? Seems a kind of pity we were the right ones. It would have been such nuts to see the right ones come, and get fired out, and we chatting along comfortably and nobody suspecting us for impostors.

We send lots and lots of love.

MARK.

The year 1898 brought the Spanish-American War. Clemens was constitutionally against all wars, but writing to Twichell, whose son had enlisted, we gather that this one was an exception.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:*

Kaltenleutgeben, near Vienna,  
June 17, '98.

DEAR JOE,—You are living your war-days over again in Dave, and it must be a strong pleasure, mixed with a sauce of apprehension—enough to make it just *schmeck*, as the Germans say. Dave will come out with two or three stars on his shoulder-straps if the war holds, and then we shall all be glad it happened.

We started with Bull Run, before. Dewey and Hobson have introduced an improvement on the game this time.

I have never enjoyed a war—even in written history—as I am enjoying this one. For this is the worthiest one that was ever fought, so far as my knowledge goes. It is a worthy thing to fight for one's freedom; it is another sight finer to fight for another man's. And I think this is the first time it has been done.

Oh, never mind Charley Warner, he would interrupt the raising of Lazarus. He would say, the will has been probated, the property distributed, it will be a world of trouble to settle the rows—better leave well enough alone; don't ever disturb *anything*, where it's going to break the soft smooth flow of things and wobble our tranquillity.



Company ! (Sh ! it happens every day—and we came out here to be quiet.)

Love to you all.

MARK.

They were spending the summer at Kaltenleutgeben, a pleasant village near Vienna, but apparently not entirely quiet. Many friends came out from Vienna, including a number of visiting Americans. Clemens, however, appears to have had considerable time for writing, as we gather from the next to Howells.

*To W. D. Howells, in America :*

Kaltenleutgeben, Bei Wien.  
Aug. 16, '98.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Your letter came yesterday. It then occurred to me that I might have known (per mental telegraph) that it was due ; for a couple of weeks ago when the Weekly came containing that handsome reference to me I was powerfully moved to write you ; and my letter went on writing itself while I was at work at my other literature during the day. But next day my other literature was still urgent—and so on and so on ; so my letter didn't get put into ink at all. But I see now, that you were writing, about that time, therefore a part of my stir could have come across the Atlantic per mental telegraph. In 1876 or '75 I wrote 40,000 words of a story called "Simon Wheeler" wherein the nub was the preventing of an execution through testimony furnished by mental telegraph from the other side of the globe. I had a lot of people scattered about the globe who carried in their pockets something like the old mesmerizer-button, made of different metals, and when they wanted to call up each other and have a talk, they "pressed the button" or did *something*, I don't remember what, and communication was at once opened. I didn't finish the story, though I re-began it in several new ways, and spent altogether 70,000 words on it, then gave it up and threw it aside.

This much as preliminary to this remark : some day people *will* be able to call each other up from any part of the world and talk by mental telegraph—and not merely by impression, the impression will be articulated into *words*. It could be a terrible thing, but it won't be, because in the upper civilizations everything like sentimentality (I was going to say sentiment) will presently get materialized out of people along with the already fading spiritualities ; and so when a man is called who doesn't wish to talk he will be like those visitors you mention : " not chosen "—and will be frankly damned and shut off.

Speaking of the ill luck of starting a piece of literary work wrong—and again and again ; always aware that there is a way, if you could only think it out, which would make the thing slide effortless from the pen—the one right way, the sole form for *you*, the other forms being for men whose line those forms are, or who are capabler than yourself : I've had no end of experience in that (and maybe I am the only one—let us hope so.) Last summer I started 16 things wrong—3 books and 13 mag. articles—and could only make 2 little wee things, 1500 words altogether, succeed :—only that out of piles and stacks of diligently-wrought MS., the labor of 6 weeks' unremitting effort. I could make all of those things go if I would take the trouble to re-begin each one half a dozen times on a new plan. But none of them was important enough except one : the story I (in the wrong form) mapped out in Paris three or four years ago and told you about in New York under seal of confidence—no other person knows of it but Mrs. Clemens—the story to be called " Which was the Dream ? "

A week ago I examined the MS—10,000 words—and saw that the plan was a totally impossible one—for me ; but a new plan suggested itself, and straightway the tale began to slide from the pen with ease and confidence. I think I've struck the right one this time. I have already put 12,000 words of it on paper and Mrs. Clemens is

pretty outspokenly satisfied with it—a hard critic to content. I feel sure that all of the first half of the story—and I hope three-fourths—will be comedy; but by the former plan the whole of it (except the first 3 chapters) would have been tragedy and unendurable, almost. I think I can carry the reader a long way before he suspects that I am laying a tragedy-trap. In the present form I could spin 16 books out of it with comfort and joy; but I shall deny myself and restrict it to one. If you should see a little short story in a magazine in the autumn called “My Platonic Sweetheart” (written 3 weeks ago) *that* is not this one. It may have been a suggester, though.

I expect all these singular privacies to interest you, and you are not to let on that they don’t.

We are leaving, this afternoon, for Ischl, to use that as a base for the baggage, and then gad around ten days among the lakes and mountains to rest-up Mrs. Clemens, who is jaded with housekeeping. I hope I can get a chance to work a little in spots—I can’t tell. But *you* do it—therefore why should you think I can’t?

[Remainder missing.]

The dream story was never completed. It was the same that he had worked on in London, and perhaps again in Switzerland. It would be tried at other times and in other forms, but it never seemed to accommodate itself to a central idea, so that the good writing in it eventually went to waste. The short story mentioned, “My Platonic Sweetheart,” a charming, idyllic tale, was not published during Mark Twain’s lifetime. Two years after his death it appeared in *Harper’s Magazine*.

The assassination of the Empress of Austria at Geneva was the startling event of that summer.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Kaltenleutgeben, Sep. 13, ’98.

DEAR JOE,—You are mistaken; people don’t send us the magazines. No—Harper, Century and McClure do;

an example I should like to recommend to other publishers. And so I thank you very much for sending me Brander's article. When you say "I like Brander Matthews; he impresses me as a man of parts and power," I back you, right up to the hub—I feel the same way—. And when you say he has earned your gratitude for cuffing me for my crimes against the Leather stockings and the Vicar, I ain't making any objection. *Dern* your gratitude!

His article is as sound as a nut. Brander knows literature, and loves it; he can talk about it and keep his temper; he can state his case so lucidly and so fairly and so forcibly that you have to agree with him, even when you *don't* agree with him; and he can discover and praise such merits as a book has, even when they are half a dozen diamonds scattered through an acre of mud. And so he has a right to be a critic.

To detail just the opposite of the above invoice is to describe me. I haven't any right to criticise books, and I don't do it except when I hate them. I often want to criticise Jane Austen, but her books madden me so that I can't conceal my frenzy from the reader; and therefore I have to stop every time I begin.

That good and unoffending lady the Empress is killed by a mad-man, and I am living in the midst of world-history again. The Queen's jubilee last year, the invasion of the Reichsrath by the police, and now this murder, which will still be talked of and described and painted a thousand years from now. To have a personal friend of the wearer of the crown burst in at the gate in the deep dusk of the evening and say in a voice broken with tears, "My God! the Empress is murdered," and fly toward her home before we can utter a question—why, it brings the giant event home to you, makes you a part of it and personally interested: it is as if your neighbor Antony should come flying and say "Cæsar is butchered—the head of the world is fallen!"

Of course there is no talk but of this. The mourning

is universal and genuine, the consternation is stupefying. The Austrian Empire is being draped with black. Vienna will be a spectacle to see, by next Saturday, when the funeral cortège marches. We are invited to occupy a room in the sumptuous new hotel (the “Krantz” where we are to live during the Fall and Winter) and view it, and we shall go.

Speaking of Mrs. Leiter, there is a noble dame in Vienna, about whom they retail similar slanders. She said in French—she is weak in French—that she had been spending a Sunday afternoon in a gathering of the “demi-monde.” Meaning the unknown land, that mercantile land, that mysterious half-world which underlies the aristocracy. But these Malapropesies are always inventions—they don’t happen.

Yes, I wish we *could* have some talks ; I’m full to the eye-lids. Had a noble good one with Parker and Dunham—land, but we were grateful for that visit !

Yours with all our loves.

MARK.

[Inclosed with the foregoing.]

Among the inadequate attempts to account for the assassination we must concede high rank to the German Emperor’s. He justly describes it as a “deed unparalleled for ruthlessness,” and then adds that it was “ordained from above.”

I think this verdict will not be popular “above.” A man is either a free agent or he isn’t. If a man is a free agent, this prisoner is responsible for what he has done ; but if a man is not a free agent, if the deed was ordained from above, there is no rational way of making this prisoner even partially responsible for it, and the German court cannot condemn him without manifestly committing a crime. Logic is logic ; and by disregarding its laws even Emperors as capable and acute as William II can be beguiled into making charges which should not

be ventured upon except in the shelter of plenty of lightning-rods.

MARK.

The end of the year 1898 found Mark Twain once more in easy, even luxurious, circumstances.

The beginning of 1899 found the Clemens family still in Vienna, occupying handsome apartments at the Hotel Krantz. Their rooms, so often thronged with gay and distinguished people, were sometimes called the "Second Embassy."

A project for world disarmament promulgated by the Czar of Russia would naturally interest Mark Twain, and when William T. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews*, cabled him for an opinion on the matter, he sent at first a brief word and on the same day followed it with more extended comment.

*To Wm. T. Stead, in London :*

No. 1.

Vienna, Jan. 9.

DEAR MR. STEAD,—The Czar is ready to disarm : *I* am ready to disarm. Collect the *others*, it should not be much of a task now.

MARK TWAIN.

*To Wm. T. Stead, in London :*

No. 2.

DEAR MR. STEAD,—Peace by compulsion. That seems a better idea than the other. Peace by persuasion has a pleasant sound, but I think we should not be able to work it. We should have to tame the human race first, and history seems to show that that cannot be done. Can't we reduce the armaments little by little—on a pro rata basis—by concert of the powers ? Can't we get four great powers to agree to reduce their strength 10 per cent a year and thrash the others into doing likewise ? For, of course, we cannot expect all of the powers to be in their right minds at one time. It has been tried. We are not going to try to get all of them to go into the scheme peaceably, are we ? In that case I must withdraw my influence ;

because, for business reasons, I must preserve the outward signs of sanity. Four is enough if they can be securely harnessed together. They can compel peace, and peace without compulsion would be against nature and not operative. A sliding scale of reduction of 10 per cent a year has a sort of plausible look, and I am willing to try that if three other powers will join. I feel sure that the armaments are now many times greater than necessary for the requirements of either peace or war. Take war-time for instance. Suppose circumstances made it necessary for us to fight another Waterloo, and that it would do what it did before—settle a large question and bring peace. I will guess that 400,000 men were on hand at Waterloo (I have forgotten the figures). In five hours they disabled 50,000 men. It took them that tedious, long time because the firearms delivered only two or three shots a minute. But we would do the work now as it was done at Omdurman, with shower guns, raining 600 balls a minute. Four men to a gun—is that the number? A hundred and fifty shots a minute per man. Thus a modern soldier is 149 Waterloo soldiers in one. Thus, also we can now retain one man out of each 150 in service, disband the others, and fight our Waterloos just as effectively as we did eighty-five years ago. We should do the same beneficent job with 2,800 men now that we did with 400,000 then. The allies could take 1,400 of the men, and give Napoleon 1,400 and then whip him.

But instead what do we see? In war-time in Germany, Russia and France taken together, we find about 8 million men equipped for the field. Each man represents 149 Waterloo men, in usefulness and killing capacity. Altogether they constitute about 350 million Waterloo men, and there are not quite that many grown males of the human race now on this planet. Thus we have this insane fact—that whereas those three countries could arm 18,000 men with modern weapons and make them the equals of 3 million men of Napoleon's day, and accomplish with

them all necessary war work, they waste their money and their prosperity creating forces of their populations in piling together 349,982,000 extra Waterloo equivalents which they would have no sort of use for if they would only stop drinking and sit down and cipher a little.

Perpetual peace we cannot have on any terms, I suppose ; but I hope we can gradually reduce the war strength of Europe till we get it down to where it ought to be—20,000 men, properly armed. Then we can have all the peace that is worth while, and when we want a war anybody can afford it.

Vienna, January 9.

P. S.—In the article I sent the figures are wrong—“350 million” ought to be 450 million ; “349,982,000” ought to be 449,982,000, and the remark about the sum being a little more than the present number of males on the planet—that is wrong, of course ; it represents really one and a half the existing males.

*To W. D. Howells, in New York :*

Hotel Krantz

Wien i. Neuer Markt 6

April 2, '99.

DEAR HOWELLS,—I am waiting for the April Harper, which is about due now ; waiting, and strongly interested. You are old enough to be a weary man, with paling interests, but you do not show it. You do your work in the same old delicate and delicious and forceful and searching and perfect way. I don't know how you can—but I suspect. I suspect that to you there is still dignity in human life, and that Man is not a joke—a poor joke—the poorest that was ever contrived. Since I wrote my Bible (last year)<sup>1</sup>—which Mrs. Clemens loathes, and shudders over, and will not listen to the last half nor allow me to

<sup>1</sup> *What is Man ?*



print any part of it, Man is not to me the respect-worthy person he was before ; and so I have lost my pride in him, and can't write gaily nor praisefully about him any more. And I don't intend to try. I mean to go on writing, for that is my best amusement, but I shan't print much, (for I don't wish to be scalped, any more than another.)

*April 5.* The Harper has come. I have been in Leipzig with your party, and then went on to Karlsbad and saw Mrs. Marsh's encounter with the swine with the tooth-pick and the other manners.<sup>1</sup>—At this point Jean carried the magazine away.

Is it imagination, or—Anyway I seem to get furtive and fleeting glimpses which I take to be the weariness and condolence of age ; indifference to sights and things once brisk with interest ; tasteless stale stuff which used to be champagne ; the boredom of travel : the secret sigh behind the public smile, the private What-in-hell-did-I-come-for !

But maybe that is your art. Maybe that is what you intend the reader to detect and think he has made a Columbus-discovery. Then it is well done, perfectly done. I wrote my last travel book <sup>2</sup>—in hell ; but I let on, the best I could, that it was an excursion through heaven. Some day I will read it, and if its lying cheerfulness fools me, then I shall believe it fooled the reader. How I did loathe that journey around the world !—except the sea-part and India.

*Evening.* My tail hangs low. I thought I was a financier—and I bragged to you. I am not bragging, now. The stock which I sold at such a fine profit early in January, has never ceased to advance, and is now worth \$60,000 more than I sold it for. I feel just as if I had been spending \$20,000 a month, and I feel reproached for this showy and unbecoming extravagance.

Last week I was going down with the family to Budapest

<sup>1</sup> In “Their Silver Wedding Journey.”

<sup>2</sup> *Following the Equator.*

to lecture, and to make a speech at a banquet. Just as I was leaving here I got a telegram from London asking for the speech for a New York paper. I (*this is strictly private*) sent it. And then *I didn't make that speech*, but another of a quite different character—a speech born of something which the introducer said. If that said speech got cabled and printed, you needn't let on that it was never uttered.

That was a darling night, and those Hungarians were lovely people. We were there a week and had a great time. At the banquet I heard their chief orator make a most graceful and easy and beautiful and delicious speech—I never heard one that enchanted me more—although I did not understand a word of it, since it was in Hungarian. But the art of it!—it was superlative.

They are wonderful English scholars, these people; my lecture audience—all Hungarians—understood me perfectly—to judge by the effects. The English clergyman told me that in his congregation are 150 young English women who earn their living teaching their language; and that there are others besides *these*.

For 60 cents a week the telephone reads the morning news to you at home; gives you the stocks and markets at noon; gives you lessons in 3 foreign languages during 3 hours; gives you the afternoon telegrams; and at night the concerts and operas. Of course even the clerks and seamstresses and bootblacks and everybody else are subscribers.

(*Correction.* Mrs. Clemens says it is 60 cents a *month*.)

I am renewing my youth. I made 4 speeches at one banquet here last Saturday night. And I've been to a lot of football matches.

Jean has been in here examining the poll for the Immortals ("Literature," March 24,) in the hope, I think, that at last she should find me at the top and you in second place; and if that is her ambition she has suffered disappointment for the third time—and will never fare any better, I hope, for you are where you belong, by every

right. She wanted to know who it is that does the voting, but I was not able to tell her. Nor when the election will be completed and decided.

*Next Morning.* I have been reading the morning paper. I do it every morning—well knowing that I shall find in it the usual depravities and basenesses and hypocrisies and cruelties that make up civilization, and cause me to put in the rest of the day pleading for the damnation of the human race. I cannot seem to get my prayers answered, yet I do not despair.

(*Escaped from*) 5 o'clock tea. ('sh !) Oh, the American girl in Europe ! Often she is creditable, but sometimes she is just shocking. This one, a minute ago—19, fat-face, raspy voice, pert ways, the self-complacency of God ; and with it all a silly laugh (embarrassed) which kept breaking out through her chatter all along, whereas there was no call for it, for she said nothing that was funny. " Spose so many 've told y' how they 'njoyed y'r chapt'r on the Germ' tongue it's bringin' coals to Newcastle Ke-he ! say anything 'bout it Ke-hehe ! Spent m' vacation 'n Russia, 'n saw Tolstoi ; he said—" It made me shudder.

*April 12.* Jean has been in here with a copy of Literature, complaining that I am *again* behind you in the election of the 10 consecrated members ; and seems troubled about it and not quite able to understand it. But I have explained to her that you are right there on the ground, inside the pool-booth, keeping game—and that that makes a large difference in these things.

*13th.* I have been to the Kunstaussstellung with Mrs. Clemens. The office of art seems to be to grovel in the dirt before Emperors and this and that and the other damned breed of priests.

Yrs ever

MARK.

Howells and Clemens were corresponding regularly again though not with the frequency of former years. Perhaps neither of them was bubbling over with things to say ; perhaps it was becoming yearly less attractive to pick up a pen and write,

and then, of course, there was always the discouragement of distance.

*To W. D. Howells, in New York :*

May 12, 1899.

DEAR HOWELLS,—7.15 p. m. Tea (for Mr. and Mrs. Tower, who are leaving for Russia) just over ; nice people and rather creditable to the human race : Mr. and Mrs. Tower ; the new Minister and his wife ; the Secretary of Legation ; the Naval (and Military) Attaché ; several English ladies ; an Irish lady ; a Scotch lady ; a particularly nice young Austrian baron who wasn't invited but came and went supposing it was the usual thing and wondered at the unusually large gathering ; two other Austrians and several Americans who were also in his fix ; the old Baronin Langeman, the only Austrian invited ;—the rest were Americans. It made just a comfortable crowd in our parlor, with an overflow into Clara's through the folding doors. I don't enjoy teas, and am daily spared them by Mrs. Clemens, but this was a pleasant one. I had only one accident. The old Baronin Langeman is a person I have a strong fondness for, for we violently disagree on some subjects and as violently agree on others : for instance, she is temperance and I am not : she has religious beliefs and feelings and I have none (she's a *Methodist* ! ) ; she is a democrat and so am I ; she is woman's rights and so am I ; she is laborers' rights and approves trades unions and strikes, and that is me. And so on. After she was gone an English lady whom I greatly like, began to talk sharply against her for contributing money, time, labor, and public expression of favor to a strike that is on (for an 11-hour day) in the silk factories of Bohemia—and she caught me unprepared and betrayed me into over-warm argument. I am sorry ; for she didn't know anything about the subject, and I did ; and one should be gentle with the ignorant, for they are the chosen of God.

(The new Minister is a good man, but out of place.

The Sec. of Legation is a good man, but out of place. The Attaché is a good man, but out of place. Our government for displacement beats the new White Star ship ; and her possible is 17,200 tons.)

*May 13, 4 p. m.* A beautiful English girl and her handsome English husband came up and spent the evening, and she certainly is a bird. English parents—she was born and reared in Roumania and couldn't talk English till she was 8 or 10. She came up clothed like the sunset, and was a delight to look at. (Roumanian costume.) . . .

Twenty-four young people have gone out to the Semmering to-day (and to-morrow) and Mrs. Clemens and an English lady and old Leschetitzky and his wife have gone to chaperon them. They gave me a chance to go, but there are no snow mountains that I want to look at. Three hours out, three hours back, and sit up all night watching the young people dance ; yelling conversationally and being yelled at, conversationally, by new acquaintances, through the deafening music, about how I like Vienna, and if it's my first visit, and how long we expect to stay, and did I see the foot-washing, and am I writing a book about Vienna, and so on. The terms seemed too severe. Snow mountains are too dear at the price. . .

For several years I have been intending to stop writing for print as soon as I could afford it. At last I can afford it, and have put the pot-boiler pen away. What I have been wanting is a chance to write a book without reserves—a book which should take account of no one's feelings, and no one's prejudices, opinions, beliefs, hopes, illusions, delusions ; a book which should say my say, right out of my heart, in the plainest language and without a limitation of any sort. I judged that that would be an unimaginable luxury, heaven on earth.

It is under way, now, and it is a luxury ! an intellectual drunk. Twice I didn't start it right ; and got pretty far in, both times, before I found it out. But I am sure it is started right this time. It is in tale-form. I believe I can

make it tell what I think of Man, and how he is constructed, and what a shabby poor ridiculous thing he is, and how mistaken he is in his estimate of his character and powers and qualities and his place among the animals.

So far, I think I am succeeding. I let the madam into the secret day before yesterday, and locked the doors and read to her the opening chapters. She said—

“It is perfectly horrible—and perfectly beautiful!”

“Within the due limits of modesty, that is what I think.”

I hope it will take me a year or two to write it, and that it will turn out to be the right vessel to contain all the abuse I am planning to dump into it.

Yours ever

MARK.

The story mentioned in the foregoing, in which Mark Twain was to give his opinion of man, was *The Mysterious Stranger*. It was not finished at the time, and its closing chapter was not found until after his death.

*To W. D. Howells, in America :*

London, July 3, '99.

DEAR HOWELLS,—. . . I've a lot of things to write you, but it's no use—I can't get time for anything these days. I must break off and write a postscript to Canon Wilberforce before I go to bed. This afternoon he left a luncheon-party half an hour ahead of the rest, and carried off my hat (which has *Mark Twain* in a big hand written in it.) When the rest of us came out there was but one hat that would go on my head—it fitted exactly, too. So wore it away. It had no name in it, but the Canon was the only man who was absent. I wrote him a note at 8 p. m. ; saying that for four hours I had not been able to take anything that did not belong to me, nor stretch a fact beyond the frontiers of truth, and my family were getting alarmed. Could he explain my trouble ? And now at 8.30

p. m. comes a note from him to say that all the afternoon he has been exhibiting a wonder-compelling mental vivacity and grace of expression, etc., etc., and have I missed a hat? Our letters have crossed.

Yours ever

MARK.

Howells wrote that he was going on a reading-tour—dreading it, of course—and asking for any advice that Clemens felt qualified to give.

*To W. D. Howells, in America :*

Sanna, Sweden, Sept. 26, '99.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Get your lecture by heart—it will pay you. I learned a trick in Vienna—by accident—which I wish I had learned years ago. I meant to read from a Tauchnitz, because I knew I hadn't well memorized the pieces; and I came on with the book and read a few sentences, then remembered that the sketch needed a few words of explanatory introduction; and so, lowering the book and now and then unconsciously using it to gesture with, I talked the introduction, and it happened to carry me into the sketch *itself*, and then I went on, pretending that I was merely talking extraneous matter and would come to the sketch *presently*. It was a beautiful success. I knew the substance of the sketch and the telling phrases of it; and so, the throwing of the rest of it into informal talk as I went along limbered it up and gave it the snap and go and freshness of an impromptu. I was to read several pieces, and I played the same game with all of them, and always the audience thought I was being reminded of outside things and throwing them in, and was going to hold up the book and begin on the sketch presently—and so I always got through the sketch before they were entirely sure that it had begun. I did the same thing in Budapest and had the same good time over again. It's a new dodge, and the best one that was ever invented.

Try it. You'll never lose your audience—not even for a moment. Their attention is fixed, and never wavers. And that is not the case where one reads from book or MS., or where he stands up without a note and frankly exposes the fact, by his confident manner and smooth phrasing, that he is not improvising, but reciting from memory. And in the heat of telling a thing that is memorised in substance only, one flashes out the happiest suddenly-begotten phrases every now and then! Try it. Such a phrase has a life and sparkle about it that twice as good a one could not exhibit if prepared beforehand, and it “fetches” an audience in such an enthusing and inspiring and uplifting way that that lucky phrase breeds another one, sure.

Your September instalment<sup>1</sup> was delicious—every word of it. You haven't lost any of your splendid art. Callers have arrived.

With love

MARK.

“Yes,” wrote Howells, “if I were a great histrionic artist like you I would get my poor essays by heart, and recite them, but being what I am I should do the thing so lifelessly that I had better recognize their deadness frankly and read them.”

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

London, Jan. 8, 1900.

DEAR JOE,—Mental Telepathy has scored another. Mental Telegraphy will be greatly respected a century hence.

By the accident of writing my sister and describing to her the remarkable cures made by Kellgren with his hands and without drugs, I brought upon myself a quite stunning surprise; for she wrote to me that she had been taking this very treatment in Buffalo—and that it was an American invention.

<sup>1</sup> “Their Silver Wedding Journey.”



Well, it does really turn out that Dr. Still, in the middle of Kansas, in a village, began to experiment in 1874, only five years after Kellgren began the same work obscurely in the village of Gotha, in Germany. Dr. Still seems to be an honest man; therefore I am persuaded that Kellgren moved him to his experiments by Mental Telegraphy across six hours of longitude, without need of a wire. By the time Still began to experiment, Kellgren had completed his development of the principles of his system and established himself in a good practice in London—1874—and was in good shape to convey his discovery to Kansas, Mental Telegraphically. . . .

Presently the Osteopath will come over here from America and will soon make himself a power that must be recognized and reckoned with; and then, 25 years from now, England will begin to claim the invention and tell all about its origin, in the Cyclopædia B— as in the case of the telegraph, applied anaesthetics and the other benefactions which she heaped her abuse upon when her inventors first offered them to her.

I cannot help feeling rather inordinately proud of America for the gay and hearty way in which she takes hold of any new thing that comes along and gives it a first rate trial. Many an ass in America is getting a deal of benefit out of X-Science's new exploitation of an age-old healing principle—*faith*, combined with the patient's imagination—let it boom along! I have no objection. Let them call it by what name they choose, so long as it does helpful work among the class which is numerically vastly the largest bulk of the human race, i.e. the fools, the idiots, the pudd'nheads.

We do not guess, we know that 9 in 10 of the species are pudd'nheads. We know it by various evidences; and one of them is, that for ages the race has respected (and almost venerated) the physician's grotesque system—the emptying of miscellaneous and harmful drugs into a person's stomach to remove ailments which in many cases

the drugs could not reach at all; in many cases could reach and help, but only at cost of damage to some other part of the man; and in the remainder of the cases the drug either retarded the cure, or the disease was cured by nature in spite of the nostrums. The doctor's insane system has not only been permitted to continue its follies for ages, but has been protected by the State and made a close monopoly—an infamous thing, a crime against a free-man's proper right to choose his own assassin or his own method of defending his body against disease and death.

And yet at the same time, with curious and senile inconsistency, the State *has* allowed the man to choose his own assassin—in one detail—the patent-medicine detail—making itself the protector of that perilous business, collecting money out of it, and appointing no committee of experts to examine the medicines and forbid them when extra dangerous. Really, when a man can prove that he is not a jackass, I think he is in the way to prove that he is no legitimate member of the race.

I have by me a list of 52 human ailments—common ones—and in this list I count 19 which the physician's art cannot cure. But there isn't one which Osteopathy or Kellgren cannot cure, if the patient comes early.

Fifteen years ago I had a deep reverence for the physician and the surgeon. But 6 months of closely watching the Kellgren business has revolutionized all that, and now I have neither reverence nor respect for the physician's trade, and scarcely any for the surgeon's. I am convinced that of all quackeries, the physician's is the grotesquest and the silliest. And they know they are shams and humbugs. They have taken the place of those augurs who couldn't look each other in the face without laughing.

See what a powerful hold our ancient superstitions have upon us: two weeks ago, when Livy committed an incredible imprudence and by consequence was promptly stricken down with a heavy triple attack—influenza,

bronchitis, and a lung affected—she recognized the gravity of the situation, and her old superstitions rose : she thought she ought to send for a doctor—Think of it—the last man in the world I should want around at such a time. Of course I did not say *no*—not that I was indisposed to take the responsibility, for I was not, my notion of a dangerous responsibility being quite the other way—but because it is unsafe to distress a sick person ; I only said we knew no good doctor, and it could not be good policy to choose at hazard ; so she allowed me to send for Kellgren. To-day she is up and around—cured. It is safe to say that persons hit in the same way at the same time are in bed yet, and booked to stay there a good while, and to be in a shakky condition and afraid of their shadows for a couple of years or more to come.

*To W. D. Howells, in Boston :*

Wellington Court, Knightsbridge,  
Jan. 25, 1900.

DEAR HOWELLS,—If you got half as much as Pond prophesied, be content and praise God—it has not happened to another. But I am sorry he didn't go with you ; for it is marvelous to hear him yarn. He is good company, cheery and hearty, and his mill is never idle. Your doing a lecture tour was heroic. It was the highest order of grit, and you have a right to be proud of yourself. No amount of applause or money or both could save it from being a hell to a man constituted as you are. It is that even to me, who am made of coarser stuff.

I knew the audiences would come forward and shake hands with you—that one infallible sign of sincere approval. In all my life, wherever it failed me I left the hall sick and ashamed, knowing what it meant.

Privately speaking, this is a sordid and criminal war, and in every way shameful and excuseless. Every day I write (in my head) bitter magazine articles about it, but I have to stop with that. For England must not fall ;

it would mean an inundation of Russian and German political degradations which would envelop the globe and steep it in a sort of Middle-Age night and slavery which would last till Christ comes again. Even wrong—and she is wrong—England must be upheld. He is an enemy of the human race who shall speak against her now. Why *was* the human race created? Or at least why wasn't something creditable created in place of it. God had his opportunity. He could have made a reputation. But no, He must commit this grotesque folly—a lark which must have cost him a regret or two when He came to think it over and observe effects. For a giddy and unbecoming caprice there has been nothing like it till this war. I talk the war with both sides—always waiting until the other man introduces the topic. Then I say “My head is with the Briton, but my heart and such rags of morals as I have are with the Boer—now we will talk, unembarrassed and without prejudice.” And so we discuss, and have no trouble.

Jan. 26.

It was my intention to make some disparaging remarks about the human race; and so I kept this letter open for that purpose, and for the purpose of telling my dream, wherein the Trinity were trying to guess a conundrum, but I can do better—for I can snip out of the “Times” various samples and side-lights which bring the race down to date, and expose it as of yesterday. If you will notice, there is seldom a telegram in a paper which fails to show up one or more members and beneficiaries of our Civilization as promenading in his shirt-tail, with the rest of his regalia in the wash.

I love to see the holy ones air their smug pieties and admire them and smirk over them, and at the same moment frankly and publicly show their contempt for the pieties of the Boer—confidently expecting the approval of the country and the pulpit, and getting it.

I notice that God is on both sides in this war; thus history repeats itself. But I am the only person who has noticed this; everybody here thinks He is playing the game for this side, and for this side only.

With great love to you all

MARK.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

London, Jan. 27, 1900.

DEAR JOE,—Apparently we are not proposing to set the Filipinos free and give their islands to them; and apparently we are not proposing to hang the priests and confiscate their property. If these things are so, the war out there has no interest for me.

I have just been examining chapter LXX of "Following the Equator," to see if the Boer's old military effectiveness is holding out. It reads curiously as if it had been written about the present war.

I believe that in the next chapter my notion of the Boer was rightly conceived. He is popularly called uncivilized, I do not know why. Happiness, food, shelter, clothing, wholesale labor, modest and rational ambitions, honesty, kindness, hospitality, love of freedom and limitless courage to fight for it, composure and fortitude in time of disaster, patience in time of hardship and privation, absence of noise and brag in time of victory, contentment with a humble and peaceful life void of insane excitements—if there is a higher and better form of civilization than this, I am not aware of it and do not know where to look for it. I suppose we have the habit of imagining that a lot of artistic, intellectual and other artificialities must be added, or it isn't complete. We and the English have these latter; but as we lack the great bulk of these others, I think the Boer civilization is the best of the two. My idea of our civilization is that it is a shabby poor thing and full of cruelties, vanities,

arrogancies, meannesses, and hypocrisies. As for the word, I hate the sound of it, for it conveys a lie ; and as for the thing itself, I wish it was in hell, where it belongs.

*Provided* we could get something better in the place of it. But that is not possible, perhaps. Poor as it is, it is better than *real* savagery, therefore we must stand by it, extend it, and (in public) praise it. And so we must not utter any hateful word about England in these days, nor fail to hope that she will win in this war, for her defeat and fall would be an irremediable disaster for the mangy human race. Naturally, then, I am for England ; but she is profoundly in the wrong, Joe, and no (instructed) Englishman doubts it. At least that is my belief. . . .

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Wellington Court,  
Knightsbridge, Mch. 4, '00.

. . . London is happy-hearted at last. The British victories have swept the clouds away and there are no uncheerful faces. For three months the private dinner parties (we go to no public ones) have been Lodges of Sorrow, and just a little depressing sometimes ; but now they are smily and animated again. Joe, do you know the Irish gentleman and the Irish lady, the Scotch gentleman and the Scotch lady ? These are darlings, every one. Night before last it was all Irish—24. One would have to travel far to match their ease and sociability and animation and sparkle and absence of shyness and self-consciousness.

It was American in these fine qualities. This was at Mr. Lecky's. He is Irish, you know. Last night it was Irish again, at Lady Gregory's. Lord Roberts is Irish ; and Sir William Butler ; and Kitchener, I think ; and a disproportion of the other prominent Generals are of

Irish and Scotch breed—keeping up the traditions of Wellington, and Sir Colin Campbell of the Mutiny. You will have noticed that in S. A., as in the Mutiny, it is usually the Irish and the Scotch that are placed in the fore-front of the battle. An Irish friend of mine says this is because the Kelts are idealists, and enthusiasts, with age-old heroisms to emulate and keep bright before the world; but that the low-class Englishman is dull and without ideals, fighting bull-doggishly while he has a leader, but losing his head and going to pieces when his leader falls—not so with the Kelt. Sir Wm. Butler said “the Kelt is the spear-head of the British lance.”

Love to you all.

MARK.

“Lecky” was W. E. H. Lecky, the Irish historian whose *History of European Morals* had been, for many years, one of Mark Twain’s favourite books.

In July the Clemenses left the small apartment at 30 Wellington Court and established a summer household a little way out of London, at Dollis Hill.

*To the Editor of the Times, in London :*

SIR,—It has often been claimed that the London postal service was swifter than that of New York, and I have always believed that the claim was justified. But a doubt has lately sprung up in my mind. I live eight miles from Printing House Square; the *Times* leaves that point at 4 o’clock in the morning, by mail, and reaches me at 5 in the afternoon, thus making the trip in thirteen hours. It is my conviction that in New York we should do it in eleven.

C.

DOLLIS HILL, N. W.

The Clemenses closed Dollis Hill House near the end of September, and put up for a brief period at a family hotel, an amusing picture of which follows.

*To J. Y. M. MacAlister, in London :*

Sep. 1900.

MY DEAR MACALISTER,—We do really start next Saturday. I meant to sail earlier, but waited to finish some studies of what are called Family Hotels. They are a London specialty, God has not permitted them to exist elsewhere ; they are ramshackle clubs which were dwellings at the time of the Heptarchy. Dover and Albemarle Streets are filled with them. The once spacious rooms are split up into coops which afford as much discomfort as can be had anywhere out of jail for any money. All the modern inconveniences are furnished, and some that have been obsolete for a century. The prices are astonishingly high for what you get. The bedrooms are hospitals for incurable furniture. I find it so in this one. They exist upon a tradition ; they represent the vanishing home-like inn of fifty years ago, and are mistaken by foreigners for it. Some quite respectable Englishmen still frequent them through inherited habit and arrested development ; many Americans also, through ignorance and superstition. The rooms are as interesting as the Tower of London, but older I think. Older and dearer. The lift was a gift of William the Conqueror, some of the beds are prehistoric. They represent geological periods. Mine is the oldest. It is formed in strata of Old Red Sandstone, volcanic tufa, ignis fatuus, and bicarbonate of hornblende, superimposed upon argillaceous shale, and contains the prints of prehistoric man. It is in No. 149. Thousands of scientists come to see it. They consider it holy. They want to blast out the prints but cannot. Dynamite rebounds from it.

Finished studies and sail Saturday in Minnehaha.

Yours ever affectionately,

MARK TWAIN.

They sailed for New York October 6th, and something more than a week later America gave them a royal welcome. The



press, far and wide, sounded Mark Twain's praises once more ; dinners and receptions were offered on every hand ; editors and lecture agents clamoured for him.

The family settled in the Earlington Hotel during a period of house-hunting. They hoped eventually to return to Hartford, but after a brief visit paid by Clemens alone to the old place he wrote :

*To Sylvester Baxter, in Boston :*

New York, Oct. 26, 1900.

DEAR MR. BAXTER,—It was a great pleasure to me to renew the other days with you, and there was a pathetic pleasure in seeing Hartford and the house again ; but I realize that if we ever enter the house again to live, our hearts will break. I am not sure that we shall ever be strong enough to endure that strain.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mr. and Mrs. Rogers wished to have them in their neighbourhood, but the houses there were not suitable, or were too expensive. Through Mr. Frank Doubleday they eventually found, at 14 West Tenth Street, a large residence handsomely furnished, and this they engaged for the winter.

Mark Twain's religion had to do chiefly with humanity in its present incarnation and concerned itself very little with any possible measure of reward or punishment in some supposed court of the hereafter. Nevertheless, psychic investigation always interested him, and he was good-naturedly willing to explore, even hoping, perhaps, to be convinced that individuality continues beyond death.

*To Mrs. Charles McQuiston :*

Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.

March 26, 1901.

DEAR MRS. MCQUISTON,—I have never had an experience which moved me to believe the living can communicate with the dead, but my wife and I have experimented in the matter when opportunity offered and shall continue to do so.

I enclose a letter which came this morning—the second

from the same source. Mrs. K— is a Missourian, and lately she discovered by accident, that she was a remarkable hypnotiser. Her best subject is a Missouri girl, Miss White, who is to come here soon and sustain strictly scientific tests before professors at Columbia University. Mrs. Clemens and I intend to be present. And we shall ask the pair to come to our house to do whatever things they can do. Meantime, if you thought well of it, you might write her and arrange a meeting, telling her it is by my suggestion and that I gave you her address.

Someone has told me that Mrs. Piper is discredited. I cannot be sure, but I think it was Mr. Myers, President of the London Psychical Research Society—we heard of his death yesterday. He was a spiritualist. I am afraid he was a very easily convinced man. We visited two mediums whom he and Andrew Lang considered quite wonderful, but they were quite transparent frauds.

Mrs. Clemens corrects me : *One* of those women was a fraud, the other not a fraud, but only an innocent, well-meaning, driveling vacancy.

Sincerely yours, S. L. CLEMENS.

In Mark Twain's Bermuda chapters entitled *Idle Notes of an Idle Excursion* he tells of an old sea captain, one Hurricane Jones, who explained biblical miracles in a practical, even if somewhat startling, fashion. In his story of the prophets of Baal, for instance, the old captain declared that the burning water was nothing more nor less than petroleum. Upon reading the "Notes," Professor Phelps of Yale wrote that the same method of explaining miracles had been offered by Sir Thomas Browne.

Captain Hurricane Jones also appears in *Roughing It*, as Captain Ned Blakely.

*To Professor William Lyon Phelps :*

Yale University,  
New York, April 24, 1901.

MY DEAR SIR,—I was not aware that old Sir Thomas had anticipated that story, and I am much obliged to

you for furnishing me the paragraph. It is curious that the same idea should have entered two heads so unlike as the head of that wise old philosopher and that of Captain Ned Wakeman, a splendidly uncultured old sailor, but in his own opinion a thinker by divine right. He was an old friend of mine of many years' standing; I made two or three voyages with him, and found him a darling in many ways. The petroleum story was not told to me; he told it to Joe Twichell, who ran across him by accident on a sea voyage where I think the two were the only passengers. A delicious pair, and admirably mated, they took to each other at once and became as thick as thieves. Joe was passing under a fictitious name, and old Wakeman didn't suspect that he was a parson; so he gave his profanity full swing, and he was a master of that great art. You probably know Twichell, and will know that that is a kind of refreshment which he is very capable of enjoying.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

For the summer Clemens and his family found a comfortable lodge in the Adirondacks—a log cabin called “The Lair”—on Saranac Lake. Soon after his arrival there he received an invitation to attend the celebration of Missouri's eightieth anniversary. He sent the following letter:

*To Edward L. Dimmitt, in St. Louis:*

Among the Adirondack Lakes, July 19, 1901.

DEAR MR. DIMMITT,—By an error in the plans, things go wrong end first in this world, and much precious time is lost and matters of urgent importance are fatally retarded. Invitations which a brisk young fellow should get, and which would transport him with joy, are delayed and impeded and obstructed until they are fifty years overdue when they reach him.

It has happened again in this case.

When I was a boy in Missouri I was always on the lookout for invitations but they always miscarried and went wandering through the aisles of time; and now they are arriving when I am old and rheumatic and can't travel and must lose my chance.

I have lost a world of delight through this matter of delaying invitations. Fifty years ago I would have gone eagerly across the world to help celebrate anything that might turn up. It would have made no difference to me what it was, so that I was there and allowed a chance to make a noise.

The whole scheme of things is turned wrong end to. Life should begin with age and its privileges and accumulations, and end with youth and its capacity to splendidly enjoy such advantages. As things are now, when in youth a dollar would bring a hundred pleasures, you can't have it. When you are old, you get it and there is nothing worth buying with it then.

It's an epitome of life. The first half of it consists of the capacity to enjoy without the chance; the last half consists of the chance without the capacity.

I am admonished in many ways that time is pushing me inexorably along. I am approaching the threshold of age; in 1977 I shall be 142. This is no time to be flitting about the earth. I must cease from the activities proper to youth and begin to take on the dignities and gravities and inertia proper to that season of honorable senility which is on its way and imminent as indicated above.

Yours is a great and memorable occasion, and as a son of Missouri I should hold it a high privilege to be there and share your just pride in the state's achievements; but I must deny myself the indulgence, while thanking you earnestly for the prized honor you have done me in asking me to be present.

Very truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The assassination of President McKinley occurred September 6, 1901.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Ampersand, Tuesday, (Sept. 10, 1901)

DEAR JOE,—It is another off day, but tomorrow I shall resume work to a *certainty*, and bid a long farewell to letter-scribbling.

The news of the President looks decidedly hopeful, and we are all glad, and the household faces are much improved, as to cheerfulness. Oh, the *talk* in the newspapers! Evidently the Human Race is the same old Human Race. And how unjust, and unreflectingly discriminating, the talkers are. Under the unsettling effects of powerful emotion the talkers are saying wild things, crazy things—they are out of themselves, and do not know it; they are temporarily insane, yet with one voice they declare the assassin *sane*—a man who has been entertaining fiery and reason-debauching maggots in his head for weeks and months. Why, no one is sane, straight along, year in and year out, and we all know it. Our insanities are of varying sorts, and express themselves in varying forms—fortunately harmless forms as a rule—but in whatever form they occur an immense upheaval of feeling can at any time topple us distinctly over the sanity-line for a little while; and then if our form happens to be of the murderous kind we must look out—and so must the spectator.

This ass with the unpronounceable name was probably more insane than usual this week or two back, and may get back upon his bearings by and by, but he was over the sanity-border when he shot the President. It is possible that it has taken him the whole interval since the murder of the King of Italy to get insane enough to attempt the President's life. Without a doubt some thousands of men have been meditating the same act

in the same interval, but new and strong interests have intervened and diverted their over-excited minds long enough to give them a chance to settle, and tranquilize, and get back upon a healthy level again. *Every* extraordinary occurrence unsettles the heads of hundreds of thousands of men for a few moments or hours or days. If there had been ten kings around when Humbert fell they would have been in great peril for a day or more—and from men in whose presence they would have been quite safe, after the excess of their excitement had had an interval in which to cool down. I bought a revolver once and travelled twelve hundred miles to kill a man. He was away. He was gone a day. With nothing else to do, I *had* to stop and think—and did. Within an hour—within half of it—I was ashamed of myself—and felt unspeakably ridiculous. I do not know what to call it if I was not insane. During a whole week my head was in a turmoil night and day fierce enough and exhausting enough to upset a stronger reason than mine.

All over the world, every day, there are some millions of men in that condition temporarily. And in that time there is always a moment—perhaps only a single one—when they would do murder if their man was at hand. If the opportunity comes a shade too late, the chances are that it has come permanently too late. Opportunity seldom comes exactly at the supreme moment. This saves a million lives a day in the world—for sure.

No Ruler is ever slain but the tremendous details of it are ravenously devoured by a hundred thousand men whose minds dwell, unaware, near the temporary-insanity frontier—and over they go, now! There is a day—two days—three—during which no Ruler would be safe from perhaps the half of them; and there is a single moment wherein he would not be safe from any of them, no doubt.

It may take this present shooting-case six months to breed another ruler-tragedy, but it will breed it. There is at least one mind somewhere which will brood, and wear,

and decay itself to the killing-point and produce that tragedy.

Every negro burned at the stake unsettles the excitable brain of another one—I mean the inflaming details of his crime, and the lurid theatricality of his exit do it—and the duplicate crime follows; and that begets a repetition, and that one another one—and so on. Every lynching-account unsettles the brains of another set of excitable white men, and lights another pyre—115 lynchings last year, 102 inside of 8 months this year; in ten years this will be *habit*, on these terms.

Yes, the wild talk you see in the papers! And from men who are sane when not upset by overwhelming excitement. A U. S. Senator—Cullom—wants this Buffalo criminal lynched! It would breed other lynchings—of men who are not dreaming of committing murders, now, and will commit none if Cullom will keep quiet and not provide the exciting cause.

And a District Attorney wants a law which shall punish with death *attempts* upon a President's life—this, mind you, as a deterrent. It would have no effect—or the opposite one. The lunatic's mind-space is *all* occupied—as mine was—with the matter in hand; there is no room in it for reflections upon what may happen to *him*. That comes after the crime.

It is the *noise* the attempt would make in the world that would breed the subsequent attempts, by unsettling the rickety minds of men who envy the criminal his vast notoriety—his obscure name tongued by stupendous Kings and Emperors—his picture printed everywhere, the triviallest detail of his movements, what he eats, what he drinks; how he sleeps, what he says, cabled abroad over the whole globe at cost of fifty thousand dollars a day—and he only a lowly shoemaker yesterday!—like the assassin of the President of France—in debt, three francs to his landlady, and insulted by her—and to-day she is proud to be able to say she knew him “as

familiarly as you know your own brother," and glad to stand till she drops and pour out columns and pages of her grandeur and her happiness upon the eager interviewer.

Nothing will check the lynchings and ruler-murder but absolute silence—the absence of pow-pow about them. How are you going to manage that? By gagging every witness and jamming him into a dungeon for life; by abolishing all newspapers; by exterminating all newspaper men; and by extinguishing God's most elegant invention, the Human Race. It is quite simple, quite easy, and I hope you will take a day off and attend to it, Joe.

I blow a kiss to you, and am

Lovingly Yours,

MARK.

When the Adirondack summer ended Clemens settled for the winter in the beautiful Appleton home at Riverdale-on-the-Hudson. It was a place of wide-spreading grass and shade—a house of ample room. They were established in it in time for Mark Twain to take an active interest in the New York elections and assist a ticket for good government to defeat Tammany Hall.

The year 1902 was an eventful one for Mark Twain. In April he received a degree of LL.D. from the University of Missouri and returned to his native State to accept it. This was his last journey to the Mississippi River. During the summer Mrs. Clemens's health broke down and illnesses of one sort or another visited other members of the family.

At York Harbour, Maine, where they had taken a cottage for the summer—a pretty place, with Howells not far distant, at Kittery Point—Mrs. Clemens's health gave way. This was at a period when telegraphic communication was far from reliable.

*To the President of The Western Union, in New York :*

"The Pines"  
York Harbor, Maine.

DEAR SIR,—I desire to make a complaint, and I bring it to you, the head of the company, because by experience I know better than to carry it to a subordinate.



I have been here a month and a half, and by testimony of friends, reinforced by personal experience, I now feel qualified to claim as an established fact that the telegraphic service here is the worst in the world except that of Boston.

These services are actually slower than was the New York and Hartford service in the days when I last complained to you—which was fifteen or eighteen years ago, when telegraphic time and train time between the mentioned points was exactly the same, to-wit, three hours and a half.

Six days ago—it was that raw day which provoked so much comment—my daughter was on her way up from New York, and at noon she telegraphed me from New Haven asking that I meet her with a cloak at Portsmouth. Her telegram reached me four hours and a quarter later—just 15 minutes too late for me to catch my train and meet her.

I judge that the telegram traveled about 200 miles. It is the best telegraphic work I have seen since I have been here, and I am mentioning it in this place not as a complaint but as a compliment. I think a compliment ought always to precede a complaint, where one is possible, because it softens resentment and insures for the complaint a courteous and gentle reception.

Still, there is a detail or two connected with this matter which ought perhaps to be mentioned. And now, having smoothed the way with the compliment, I will venture them. The head corpse in the York Harbor office sent me that telegram altho (1) he knew it would reach me too late to be of any value ; (2) also, that he was going to send it to me by his boy ; (3) that the boy would not take the trolley and come the 2 miles in 12 minutes, but would walk ; (4) that he would be two hours and a quarter on the road ; (5) and that he would collect 25 cents for transportation, for a telegram which the h. c. knew to be worthless before he started it. From these data I infer that the Western

Union owes me 75 cents ; that is to say, the amount paid for combined wire and land transportation—a recoup provided for in the printed paragraph which heads the telegraph-blank.

By these humane and Christian stages we now arrive at the complaint proper. We have had a grave case of illness in the family, and a relative was coming some six hundred miles to help in the sick-room during the convalescing period. It was an anxious time, of course, and I wrote and asked to be notified as to the hour of the expected arrival of this relative in Boston or in York Harbor. Being afraid of the telegraph—which I think ought not to be used in times of hurry and emergency—I asked that the desired message be brought to me by some swift method of transportation. By the milkman, if he was coming this way. But there are always people who think they know more than you do, especially young people ; so of course the young fellow in charge of this lady used the telegraph. And at Boston, of all places ! Except York Harbor.

The result was as usual ; let me employ a statelier and exacter term, and say, historical.

The dispatch was handed to the h. c. of the Boston office at 9 this morning. It said, “ Shall bring A. S. to you eleven forty-five this morning.” The distance traveled by the dispatch is forty or fifty miles, I suppose, as the train-time is five minutes short of two hours, and the trains are so slow that they can’t give a W. U. telegram two hours and twenty minutes start and overtake it.

As I have said, the dispatch was handed in at Boston at 9. The expected visitors left Boston at 9.40, and reached my house at 12 noon, beating the telegram 2 solid hours, and 5 minutes over.

The boy brought the telegram. It was bald-headed with age, but still legible. The boy was prostrate with travel and exposure, but still alive, and I went out to condole with him and get his last wishes and send for the

ambulance. He was waiting to collect transportation before turning his passing spirit to less serious affairs. I found him strangely intelligent, considering his condition and where he is getting his training. I asked him at what hour the telegram was handed to the h. c. in Boston. He answered brightly, that he didn't know.

I examined the blank, and sure enough the wary Boston h. c. had thoughtfully concealed that statistic. I asked him at what hour it had started from Boston. He answered up as brightly as ever, and said he didn't know.

I examined the blank, and sure enough the Boston h. c. had left that statistic out in the cold, too. In fact it turned out to be an official concealment—no blank was provided for its exposure. And none required by the law, I suppose. "It is a good one-sided idea," I remarked; "They can take your money and ship your telegram next year if they want to—you've no redress. The law ought to extend the privilege to all of us."

The boy looked upon me coldly.

I asked him when the telegram reached York Harbor. He pointed to some figures following the signature at the bottom of the blank—"12.14." I said it was now 1.45 and asked—

"Do you mean that it reached your morgue an hour and a half ago?"

He nodded assent.

"It was at that time half an hour too late to be of any use to me, if I wanted to go and meet my people—which was the case—for by the wording of the message you can see that they were to arrive at the station at 11.45. Why did your h. c. send me this useless message? Can't he read? Is he dead?"

"It's the rules."

"No, that does not account for it. Would he have sent it if it had been three years old, I in the meantime deceased, and he aware of it?"

The boy didn't know.

"Because, you know, a rule which required him to forward to the cemetery to-day a dispatch due three years ago, would be as good a rule as one which should require him to forward a telegram to me to-day which he knew had lost all its value an hour or two before he started it. The construction of such a rule would discredit an idiot; in fact an idiot—I mean a common ordinary Christian idiot, you understand—would be ashamed of it, and for the sake of his reputation wouldn't make it. What do you think?"

He replied with much natural brilliancy that he wasn't paid for thinking.

This gave me a better opinion of the commercial intelligence pervading his morgue than I had had before; it also softened my feelings toward him, and also my tone, which had hitherto been tinged with bitterness.

"Let bygones be bygones," I said, gently, "we are all erring creatures, and mainly idiots, but God made us so and it is dangerous to criticise."

Sincerely

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mrs. Clemens's improvement was scarcely perceptible. It was not until October that they were able to remove her to Riverdale, and then only in a specially arranged invalid-car. At the end of the long journey she was carried to her room and did not leave it again for many months.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford :*

Riverdale, N. Y., Oct. 31, '02.

DEAR JOE,—It is ten days since Susy [Twichell] wrote that you were laid up with a sprained shoulder, since which time we have had no news about it. I hope that no news is good news, according to the proverb; still, authoritative confirmation of it will be gladly received in this family, if some of you will furnish it. Moreover, I should like to know how and where it happened. In the

pulpit, as like as not, otherwise you would not be taking so much pains to conceal it. This is not a malicious suggestion, and not a personally-invented one: you told me yourself, once, that you threw artificial power and impressiveness into places in your sermons where needed, by “banging the bible”—(your own words.) You have reached a time of life when it is not wise to take these risks. You would better jump around. We all have to change our methods as the infirmities of age creep upon us. Jumping around will be impressive now, whereas before you were gray it would have excited remark.

Poor LIVY drags along drearily. It must be hard times for that turbulent spirit. It will be a long time before she is on her feet again. It is a most pathetic case. I wish I could transfer it to myself. Between ripping and raging and smoking and reading, I could get a good deal of a holiday out of it.

Clara runs the house smoothly and capably. She is discharging a trial-cook to-day and hiring another.

A power of love to you all !

MARK.

Such was the state of Mrs. Clemens's health that visitors were excluded from the sick room, and even Clemens himself was allowed to see her no more than a few moments at a time. These brief, precious visits were the chief interests of his long days. Occasionally he was allowed to send her a few lines, reporting his occupations, and these she was sometimes permitted to answer. Only one of his notes has been preserved, written after a day, now rare, of literary effort. Its signature, the letter Y, stands for “Youth,” always her name for him.

*To Mrs. Clemens :*

DEAR HEART,—I've done another full day's work, and finished before 4. I have been reading and dozing since—and would have had a real sleep a few minutes ago but for an incursion to bring me a couple of unimportant letters. I've stuck to the bed all day and am getting back

my lost ground. Next time I will be strictly careful and make my visit very short—just a kiss and a rush. Thank you for your dear, dear note, you who are my own and only sweetheart.

Sleep well !

Y.

The burden of the Clemens household had fallen almost entirely upon Clara Clemens. In addition to supervising its customary affairs, she also shouldered the responsibility of an unusual combination of misfortunes, for besides the critical condition of her mother, her sister, Jean Clemens, was down with pneumonia, no word of which must come to Mrs. Clemens. In some account of it, which he set down later, Clemens wrote : " It was fortunate for us all that Clara's reputation for truthfulness was so well established in her mother's mind. It was our daily protection from disaster. The mother never doubted Clara's word. Clara could tell her large improbabilities without exciting any suspicion, whereas if I tried to market even a small and simple one the case would have been different. I was never able to get a reputation like Clara's."

*To J. Y. M. MacAlister, in London :*

Riverdale, New York.  
April, 7, '03.

DEAR MACALISTER,—Yours arrived last night, and God knows I was glad to get it, for I was afraid I had blundered into an offence in some way and forfeited your friendship—a kind of blunder I have made so many times in my life that I am always standing in a waiting and morbid dread of its occurrence.

Three days ago I was in condition—during one horribly long night—to sympathetically roast with you in your "hell of troubles." During that night I was back again where I was in the black days when I was buried under a mountain of debt. I called the daughters to me in private council and paralysed them with the announcement, " Our outgo has increased in the past 8 months until our expenses are now 125 per cent. greater than our income."

It was a mistake. When I came down in the morning a gray and aged wreck, and went over the figures again, I found that in some unaccountable way (unaccountable to a business man but not to me) I had multiplied the totals by 2. By God I dropped 75 years on the floor where I stood.

Do you know it affected me as one is affected when he wakes out of a hideous dream and finds that it was only a dream. It was a great comfort and satisfaction to me to call the daughters to a private meeting of the Board again and say, "You need not worry any more; our outgo is only a third more than our income; in a few months your mother will be out of her bed and on her feet again—then we shall drop back to normal and be all right."

Certainly there is a blistering and awful reality about a well-arranged *unreality*. It is quite within the possibilities that two or three nights like that night of mine could drive a man to suicide. He would refuse to examine the figures; they would revolt him so, and he could go to his death unaware that there was nothing serious about them. I cannot get that night out of my head, it was so vivid, so real, so ghastly. In any other year of these 33 the relief would have been simple: go where you can cut your cloth to fit your income. You can't do that when your wife *can't* be moved, even from one room to the next.

Clara spells the trained nurse afternoons; I am allowed to see Mrs. Clemens 20 minutes twice a day and write her two letters a day provided I put no news in them. No other person ever sees her except the physician and now and then a nerve-specialist from New York. She saw there was something the matter that morning, but she got no facts out of me. But that is nothing—she hasn't had anything but lies for 8 months. A fact would give her a relapse.

The doctor and a specialist met in conspiracy five days ago, and in their belief she will by and by come out of this as good as new, substantially. They ordered her to

Italy for next winter—which seems to indicate that by autumn she will be able to undertake the voyage. So Clara is writing a Florence friend to take a look round among the villas for us in the regions near that city. It seems early to do this, but Joan Bergheim thought it would be wise. . . .

Mark Twain could never get up much enthusiasm for the writings of Scott. His praise of *Quentin Durward* is about the only approval he ever accorded to the works of the great romanticist.

*To Brander Matthews, in New York :*

New York City, May 4, '03.

DEAR BRANDER,—I haven't been out of my bed for four weeks, but—well, I have been reading, a good deal, and it occurs to me to ask you to sit down, some time or other when you have 8 or 9 months to spare, and jot me down a certain few literary particulars for my help and elevation. Your time need not be thrown away, for at your further leisure you can make Columbian lectures out of the results and do your students a good turn.

1. Are there in Sir Walter's novels passages done in good English—English which is neither slovenly nor involved ?

2. Are there passages whose English is not poor and thin and commonplace, but is of a quality above that ?

3. Are there passages which burn with real fire—not punk, fox-fire, make believe ?

4. Has he heroes and heroines who are not cads and cadesses ?

5. Has he personages whose acts and talk correspond with their characters as described by him ?

6. Has he heroes and heroines whom the reader admires, admires, and knows *why* ?

7. Has he funny characters that are funny, and humorous passages that are humorous ?



8. Does he ever chain the reader's interest, and make him reluctant to lay the book down ?

9. Are there pages where he ceases from posing, ceases from admiring the placid flood and flow of his own dilutions, ceases from being artificial, and is for a time, long or short, recognizably sincere and in earnest ?

10. Did he know how to write English, and didn't do it because he didn't want to ?

11. Did he use the right word only when he couldn't think of another one, or did he run so much to wrong because he didn't know the right one when he saw it ?

12. Can you read him ? and keep your respect for him ? Of course a person could in *his* day—an era of sentimentality and sloppy romantics—but land ! can a body do it today ?

Brander, I lie here dying, slowly dying, under the blight of Sir Walter. I have read the first volume of Rob Roy, and as far as chapter XIX of Guy Mannering, and I can no longer hold my head up nor take any nourishment. Lord, it's all so juvenile ! so artificial, so shoddy ; and such wax figures and skeletons and spectres. Interest ? Why, it is impossible to feel an interest in these bloodless shams, these milk-and-water humbugs. And oh, the poverty of the invention ! Not poverty in inventing situations, but poverty in furnishing reasons for them. Sir Walter usually gives himself away when he arranges for a situation—elaborates, and elaborates, and elaborates, till if you live to get to it you don't believe in it when it happens.

I can't find the rest of Rob Roy, I can't stand any more Mannering—I do not know just what to do, but I will reflect, and not quit this great study rashly. He *was* great, in his day, and to his proper audience ; and so was God in Jewish times, for that matter, but why should either of them rank high now ? And *do* they ?—honest, now, *do* they ? Dam'd if I believe it.

My, I wish I could see you and Leigh Hunt !

Sincerely Yours S. L. CLEMENS.

*To Brander Matthews, in New York :*

Riverdale, May 8, '03 (Mailed June, 1910).

DEAR BRANDER,—I'm still in bed, but the days have lost their dulness since I broke into Sir Walter and lost my temper. I finished Guy Mannering—that curious, curious book, with its mob of squalid shadows jabbering around a single flesh-and-blood being—Dimmont; a book crazily put together out of the very refuse of the romance-artist's stage properties—finished it and took up Quentin Durward, and finished that.

It was like leaving the dead to mingle with the living : it was like withdrawing from the infant class in the College of Journalism to sit under the lectures in English literature in Columbia University.

I wonder who wrote Quentin Durward ?

Yrs ever

MARK.

In 1903, preparations were going on for a great world's fair, to be held in St. Louis, and among other features proposed was a World's Literary Convention, with a week to be set apart in honour of Mark Twain, and a special Mark Twain Day in it, on which the National Association would hold grand services in honour of the distinguished Missourian.

*To T. F. Gatts, of Missouri :*

New York, May 30, 1903.

DEAR MR. GATTS,—It is indeed a high compliment which you offer me in naming an association after me and in proposing the setting apart of a Mark Twain day at the great St. Louis fair, but such compliments are not proper for the living ; they are proper and safe for the dead only. I value the impulse which moves you to tender me these honors. I value it as highly as any one can, and am grateful for it, but I should stand in a sort of terror of the honors themselves. So long as we remain alive we are not safe

from doing things which, however righteously and honorably intended, can wreck our repute and extinguish our friendships.

I hope that no society will be named for me while I am still alive, for I might at some time or other do something which would cause its members to regret having done me that honor. After I shall have joined the dead I shall follow the customs of those people and be guilty of no conduct that can wound any friend; but until that time shall come I shall be a doubtful quantity like the rest of our race.

Very truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The National Mark Twain Association did not surrender easily. Mr. Gatts wrote a second letter full of urgent appeal. If Mark Twain was tempted, we get no hint of it in his answer.

*To T. F. Gatts, of Missouri:*

New York, June 8, 1903.

DEAR MR. GATTS,—While I am deeply touched by the desire of my friends of Hannibal to confer these great honors upon me, I must still forbear to accept them. Spontaneous and unpremeditated honors, like those which came to me at Hannibal, Columbia, St. Louis and at the village stations all down the line, are beyond all price and are a treasure for life in the memory, for they are a free gift out of the heart and they come without solicitations; but I am a Missourian and so I shrink from distinctions which have to be arranged beforehand and with my privity, for I then become a party to my own exalting. I am humanly fond of honors that happen but chary of those that come by canvass and intention. With sincere thanks to you and your associates for this high compliment which you have been minded to offer me, I am,

Very truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

By the end of June Mrs. Clemens was able to leave Riverdale, and she made the journey to Quarry Farm, Elmira. The house in Hartford had been sold; and a house which, prior to Mrs. Clemens's breakdown, Clemens had bought near Tarrytown (expecting to settle permanently on the Hudson) had been let.

At Quarry Farm Mrs. Clemens continued to improve, and Clemens, once more able to work, occupied the study which Mrs. Crane had built for him thirty years before, and where *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn* and the *Wandering Prince* had been called into being.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford, Conn. :*

Quarry Farm, Elmira, N. Y.,  
July 21, '03.

DEAR JOE,—That love-letter delighted Livy beyond any like utterance received by her these thirty years and more. I was going to answer it for her right away, and said so; but she reserved the privilege to herself. I judge she is accumulating Hot Stuff—as George Ade would say. . . .

Livy is coming along: eats well, sleeps some, is mostly very gay, not very often depressed; spends all day on the porch, sleeps there a part of the night, makes excursions in carriage and in wheel-chair; and, in the matter of superintending everything and everybody, has resumed business at the old stand.

Did you ever go house-hunting 3,000 miles away? It costs three months of writing and telegraphing to pull off a success. We finished 3 or 4 days ago, and took the Villa Papiniano (dam the name, I have to look at it 2 minutes after writing it, and *then* am always in doubt) for a year by cable. Three miles outside of Florence, under Fiesole—a darling location, and apparently a choice house, near Fiske.

There's 7 in our gang. All women but me. It means trunks and things. But thanks be! To-day (this is private) comes a most handsome voluntary document with seals and escutcheons on it from the Italian Am-

bassador (who is a stranger to me) commanding the Customs people to keep their hands off the Clemens's things. Now wasn't it lovely of him? And wasn't it lovely of me to let Livy take a pencil and edit my answer and knock a good third of it out?

And that's a nice ship—the Irene! new—swift—13,000 tons—rooms up in the sky, open to sun and air—and all that. I was desperately troubled—for Livy—about the down-cellar cells in the ancient “Lahn.”

The cubs are in Riverdale, yet; they come to us the first week in August.

With lots and lots of love to you all,

MARK.

Clemens and family left Elmira October the 5th for New York City. They remained at the Hotel Grosvenor until their sailing date, October 24th. A few days earlier, Mr. Frank Doubleday sent a volume of Kipling's poems and de Blowitz's *Memoirs* for entertainment on the ship. Mark Twain's acknowledgment follows.

*To F. N. Doubleday, in New York :*

The Grosvenor,  
October 12, '03.

DEAR DOUBLEDAY,—The books came—ever so many thanks. I have been reading “The Bell Buoy” and “The Old Men” over and over again—my custom with Kipling's work—and saving up the rest for other leisurely and luxurious meals. A bell-buoy is a deeply impressive fellow-being. In these many recent trips up and down the Sound in the Kanawha<sup>1</sup> he has talked to me nightly, sometimes in his pathetic and melancholy way, sometimes with his strenuous and urgent note, and I got his meaning—now I have his words! No one but Kipling could do this strong and vivid thing. Some day I hope to hear the poem chanted or sung—with the bell-buoy breaking in, out of the distance.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rogers's yacht.

"The Old Men," delicious, isn't it? And so comically true. I haven't arrived there yet, but I suppose I am on the way. . . .

Yours ever,

MARK.

P. S. Your letter has arrived. It makes me proud and glad—what Kipling says. I hope Fate will fetch him to Florence while we are there. I would rather see him than any other man.

We've let the Tarrytown house for a year. Man, you would never have believed a person could let a house in these times. That one's for sale, the Hartford one is sold. When we buy again may we—may I—be damned.

I've dipped into Blowitz and find him quaintly and curiously interesting. I think he tells the straight truth, too. I knew him a little, 23 years ago.

The appreciative word which Kipling had sent Double-day was: "I love to think of the great and God-like Clemens. He is the biggest man you have on your side of the water by a damn sight, and don't you forget it. Cervantes was a relation of his."

Mrs. Clemens stood the voyage to Italy very well and, in due time, the family were installed in the Villa Reale di Quarto, the picturesque old Palace of Cosimo, a spacious, luxurious place, even if not entirely cheerful or always comfortable during the changeable Tuscan winter.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:*

Villa di Quarto,  
Florence, Jan. 7, '04.

DEAR JOE,—. . . I have had a handsome success, in one way, here. I left New York under a sort of half promise to furnish to the Harper magazines 30,000 words this year. Magazining is difficult work because every third page represents 2 pages that you have put in the fire; (because you are nearly sure to *start* wrong twice)

and so when you have finished an article and are willing to let it go to print it represents only 10 cents a word instead of 30.

But this time I had the curious (and unprecedented) luck to start right in each case. I turned out 37,000 words in 25 working days; and the reason I think I started right every time is, that not only have I approved and accepted the several articles, but the court of last resort (Livy) has done the same.

On many of the between-days I did some work, but only of an idle and not necessarily necessary sort, since it will not see print until I am dead. I shall continue this (an hour per day) but the rest of the year I expect to put in on a couple of long books (half-completed ones.) No more magazine-work hanging over my head.

This secluded and silent solitude, this clean, soft air and this enchanting view of Florence, the great valley and the snow-mountains that frame it are the right conditions for work. They are a persistent inspiration. To-day is very lovely; when the afternoon arrives there will be a new picture every hour till dark, and each of them divine—or progressing from divine to diviner and divinest. On this (second) floor Clara's room commands the finest; she keeps a window ten feet high wide open all the time and frames it in. I go in from time to time, every day and trade sass for a look. The central detail is a distant and stately snow-hump that rises above and behind black-forested hills, and its sloping vast buttresses, velvety and sun-polished with purple shadows between, make the sort of picture we knew that time we walked in Switzerland in the days of our youth.

I wish I could show your letter to Livy—but she must wait a week or so for it. I think I told you she had a prostrating week of tonsillitis a month ago; she has remained very feeble ever since, and confined to the bed of course, but we allow ourselves to believe she will regain the lost ground in another month. Her physician is

Professor Grocco—she could not have a better. And she has a very good trained nurse.

Love to all of you from all of us. And to all of our dear Hartford friends.

MARK.

*P. S. 3 days later.*

Livy is as remarkable as ever. The day I wrote you—that night, I mean—she had a bitter attack of gout or rheumatism occupying the whole left arm from shoulder to fingers, accompanied by fever. The pains racked her 50 or 60 hours; they have departed, now—and already she is planning a trip to Egypt next fall, and a winter's sojourn there! This is life in her yet.

You will be surprised that I was willing to do so much magazine-writing—a thing I have always been chary about—but I had good reasons. Our expenses have been so prodigious for a year and a half, and are still so prodigious, that Livy was worrying altogether too much about them, and doing a very dangerous amount of lying awake on their account. It was necessary to stop that, and it is now stopped.

Yes, she is remarkable, Joe. Her rheumatic attack set me to cursing and swearing, without limit as to time or energy, but it merely concentrated her patience and her unconquerable fortitude. It is the difference between us. I can't count the different kinds of ailments which have assaulted her in this fiendish year and a half—and I forgive none of them—but here she comes up again as bright and fresh and enterprising as ever, and goes to planning about Egypt, with a hope and a confidence which are to me amazing.

Clara is calling for me—we have to go into town and pay calls.

MARK.

In Florence, that winter, Clemens began dictating to his secretary some autobiographical chapters. This was the work which was “not to see print until I am dead.” He found it a



pleasant, lazy occupation and wrote his delight in it to Howells in a letter which seems not to have survived. In his reply, Howells wrote: "You do stir me mightily with the hope of dictating and I will try it when I get the chance. But there is the temperamental difference. You are dramatic and unconscious; you count the thing more than yourself; I am cursed with consciousness to the core, and can't say myself out; I am always saying myself *in*, and setting myself above all that I say, as of more worth. Lately I have felt as if I were rotting with egotism. I don't admire myself; I am sick of myself; but I can't think of anything else. Here I am at it now, when I ought to be rejoicing with you at the blessing you have found. . . . I'd like immensely, to read your autobiography. You always rather bewildered me by your veracity, and I fancy you may tell the truth about yourself. But *all* of it? The black truth which we all know of ourselves in our hearts, or only the whity-brown truth of the pericardium, or the nice, whitened truth of the shirt-front? Even *you* won't tell the black heart's-truth. The man who could do it would be famed to the last day the sun shone upon."

We gather from Mark Twain's answer that he was not deceiving himself in the matter of his confessions.

*To W. D. Howells, in New York :*

Villa di Quarto, Florence,  
March 14, '04.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Yes, I set up the safeguards, in the first day's dictating;—taking this position: that an autobiography is the truest of all books; for while it inevitably consists mainly of extinctions of the truth, shirkings of the truth, partial revealments of the truth, with hardly an instance of plain straight truth, the remorseless truth *is* there, between the lines, where the author is raking dust upon it, the result being that the reader knows the author in spite of his wily diligences.

The summer in England! you can't ask better luck than that. Then you will run over to Florence; we shall all be hungry to see you all. We are hunting for another villa, (this one is plenty large enough but has no room in it) but even if we find it I am afraid it will be months before we can move Mrs. Clemens. Of course it will.

But it comforts us to let on that we think otherwise, and these pretensions help to keep hope alive in her.

Good-bye, with love, *Amen*.

Yours ever

MARK.

The year of the World's Fair had come, and an invitation from Gov. Francis, of Missouri, came to Mark Twain in Florence, personally inviting him to attend the great celebration and carry off first prize.

*To Gov. Francis, of Missouri :*

Villa di Quarto, Firenze,  
May 26, 1904.

DEAR GOVERNOR FRANCIS,—It has been a dear wish of mine to exhibit myself at the Great Fair and get a prize, but circumstances beyond my control have interfered, and I must remain in Florence. Although I have never taken prizes anywhere else I used to take them at school in Missouri half a century ago, and I ought to be able to repeat, now, if I could have a chance. I used to get the medal for good spelling, every week, and I could have had the medal for good conduct if there hadn't been so much corruption in Missouri in those days ; still, I got it several times by trading medals and giving boot. I am willing to give boot now, if—however, those days are forever gone by in Missouri, and perhaps it is better so. Nothing ever stops the way it was in this changeable world. Although I cannot be at the Fair, I am going to be represented there anyway, by a portrait, by Professor Gelli. You will find it excellent. Good judges here say it is better than the original. They say it has all the merits of the original and keeps still, besides. It sounds like flattery, but it is just true.

I suppose you will get a prize, because you have created the most prodigious and in all ways most wonderful Fair the planet has ever seen. Very well, you have indeed

earned it: and with it the gratitude of the State and the nation.

Sincerely yours,

MARK TWAIN.

It was only a few days after the foregoing was written that death entered Villa Quarto—unexpectedly at last—for with the first June days Mrs. Clemens had seemed really to improve. It was on Sunday, June 5th, that the end came. Clemens, with his daughter Jean, had returned from a long drive, during which they had visited a Villa with the thought of purchase. On their return they were told that their patient had been better that afternoon than for three months. Yet it was only a few hours later that she left them, so suddenly and quietly that even those near her did not at first realize that she was gone.

*To W. D. Howells, in New York.*

Villa di Quarto, Florence,  
June 6, '04.

DEAR HOWELLS,—Last night at 9.20 I entered Mrs. Clemens's room to say the usual goodnight—and she was dead—tho' no one knew it. She had been cheerfully talking, a moment before. She was sitting up in bed—she had not lain down for months—and Katie and the nurse were supporting her. They supposed she had fainted, and they were holding the oxygen pipe to her mouth, expecting to revive her. I bent over her and looked in her face, and I think I spoke—I was surprised and troubled that she did not notice me. Then we understood, and our hearts broke. How poor we are to-day!

But how thankful I am that her persecutions are ended. I would not call her back if I could.

To-day, treasured in her worn old Testament, I found a dear and gentle letter from you, dated Far Rockaway, Sept. 13, 1896, about our poor Susy's death. I am tired and old; I wish I were with Livy.

I send my love—and hers—to you all.

S. L. C.

The Clemens family arrived in America in July, and were accompanied by Twichell to Elmira, and on the 14th Mrs. Clemens was laid to rest by the side of Susy and little Langdon. R. W. Gilder had arranged for them to occupy, for the summer, a cottage on his place at Tyringham, in the Berkshire Hills. By November they were at the Grosvenor, in New York, preparing to establish themselves in a house which they had taken on the corner of Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue—Number 21.

*To F. N. Doubleday, in New York :*

DEAR DOUBLEDAY,—I did not know you were going to England : I would have freighted you with such messages of homage and affection to Kipling. And I would have pressed his hand, through you, for his sympathy with me in my crushing loss, as expressed by him in his letter to Gilder. You know my feeling for Kipling and that it antedates that expression.

I was glad that the boys came here to invite me to the house-warming and I think they understood why a man in the shadow of a calamity like mine could not go.

It has taken three months to repair and renovate our house—corner of 9th and 5th Avenue, but I shall be in it in 10 or 15 days hence. Much of the furniture went into it today (from Hartford). We have not seen it for 13 years. Katy Leary, our old housekeeper, who has been in our service more than 24 years, cried when she told me about it to-day. She said "I had forgotten it was so beautiful, and it brought Mrs. Clemens right back to me—in that old time when she was so young and lovely."

Jean and my secretary and the servants whom we brought from Italy because Mrs. Clemens liked them so well, are still keeping house in the Berkshire hills—and waiting. Clara (nervously wrecked by her mother's death) is in the hands of a specialist in 69th St., and I shall not be allowed to have any communication with

her—even telephone—for a year. I am in this comfortable little hotel, and still in bed—for I dasn't budge till I'm safe from my pet devil, bronchitis.

Isn't it pathetic? One hour and ten minutes before Mrs. Clemens died I was saying to her "To-day, after five months search, I've found the villa that will content you: to-morrow you will examine the plans and give it your consent and I will buy it." Her eyes danced with pleasure, for she longed for a home of her own. And there, on that morrow, she lay white and cold. And unresponsive to my reverent caresses—a new thing to me and a new thing to her; *that* had not happened before in five and thirty years.

I am coming to see you and Mrs. Doubleday by and bye. She loved and honored Mrs. Doubleday and her work.

Always yours, MARK.

It was a presidential year and the air was thick with politics. Mark Twain was no longer actively interested in the political situation; he was only disheartened by the hollowness and pretence of office-seeking, and the methods of office-seekers in general. Grieved that Twichell should still pin his faith to any party when all parties were so obviously venal and time-serving, he wrote in outspoken and rather sombre protest.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:*

The Grosvenor, Nov. 4, '04.

Oh, dear! get out of that sewer—party politics—dear Joe. At least with your mouth. We had only two men who could make speeches for their parties and preserve their honor and their dignity. One of them is dead. Possibly there were four. I am sorry for John Hay; sorry and ashamed. And yet I know he couldn't help it. He wears the collar, and he had to pay the penalty. Certainly he had no more desire to stand up before a mob of confiding human incapables and debauch them than you had. Certainly he took no more real pleasure in distorting history, concealing facts, propagating immoralities,

and appealing to the sordid side of human nature than did you; but he was his party's property, and he had to climb away down and do it.

It is interesting, wonderfully interesting—the miracles which party-politics can do with a man's mental and moral make-up. Look at McKinley, Roosevelt, and yourself: in private life spotless in character; honorable, honest, just, humane, generous; scorning trickeries, treacheries, suppressions of the truth, mistranslations of the meanings of facts, the filching of credit earned by another, the condoning of crime, the glorifying of base acts: in public political life the *reverse* of all this. . . .

By George, Joe, you are as handy at the game as if you had been in training for it all your life. Your campaign Address is built from the ground up upon the oldest and best models. There isn't a paragraph in it whose facts or morals will wash—not even a sentence, I believe.

But you will soon be out of this. You didn't *want* to do it—that is sufficiently apparent, thanks be!—but you couldn't well get out of it. In a few days you will be out of it, and then you can fumigate yourself and take up your legitimate work again and resume your clean and wholesome private character once more and be happy—and useful.

I know I ought to hand you some guff, now, as propitiation and apology for these reproaches, but on the whole I believe I won't.

I have inquired, and find that Mitsikuri does not arrive here until to-morrow night. I shall watch out, and telephone again, for I greatly want to see him.

Always Yours,

MARK.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:*

Feb. 16, '05.

DEAR JOE,—I knew I had in me somewhere a definite feeling about the President if I could only find the words

to define it with. Here they are, to a hair—from Leonard Jerome: "For twenty years I have loved Roosevelt the man and hated Roosevelt the statesman and politician."

It's mighty good. Every time, in 25 years, that I have met Roosevelt the man, a wave of welcome has streaked through me with the hand-grip; but whenever (as a rule) I meet Roosevelt the statesman and politician, I find him destitute of morals and not respectable. It is plain that where his political self and his party self are concerned he has nothing resembling a conscience; that under those inspirations he is naively indifferent to the restraints of duty and even unaware of them; ready to kick the Constitution into the back yard whenever it gets in the way; and whenever he smells a vote, not only willing but eager to buy it, give extravagant rates for it and pay the bill—not out of his own pocket or the party's, but out of the nation's, by cold pillage. As per Order 78 and the appropriation of the Indian trust funds.

But Roosevelt is excusable—I recognize it and (ought to) concede it. We are all insane, each in his own way, and with insanity goes irresponsibility. Theodore the man is sane; in fairness we ought to keep in mind that Theodore, as statesman and politician, is insane and irresponsible.

Do not throw these enlightenments aside, but study them, let them raise you to higher planes and make you better. You taught me in my callow days, let me pay back the debt now in my old age out of a thesaurus with wisdom smelted from the golden ores of experience.

Ever yours for sweetness and light.

MARK.

*To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:*

March 14, '05.

DEAR JOE,—I have a Puddn'head maxim:

"When a man is a pessimist before 48 he knows

too much; if he is an optimist after it, he knows too little."

It is with contentment, therefore, that I reflect that I am better and wiser than you. Joe, you seem to be dealing in "bulks," now; the "bulk" of the farmers and U. S. Senators are "honest." As regards purchase and sale with *money*? Who doubts it? Is that the only measure of honesty? Aren't there a dozen kinds of honesty which can't be measured by the money-standard? Treason is treason—and there's more than one form of it; the money-form is but one of them. When a person is disloyal to any confessed duty, he is plainly and simply dishonest, and knows it; knows it, and is privately troubled about it and not proud of himself. Judged by this standard—and who will challenge the validity of it?—there isn't an honest man in Connecticut, nor in the Senate, nor anywhere else. I do not even except myself, this time.

Am I finding fault with you and the rest of the populace? *No*—I assure you I am not. For I know the human race's limitations, and this makes it my duty—my pleasant duty—to be fair to it. Each person in it is honest in one or several ways, but no member of it is honest in all the ways required by—by what? *By his own standard.* Outside of that, as I look at it, there is no obligation upon him.

Am I honest? I give you my word of honor (private) I am not. For seven years I have suppressed a book which my conscience tells me I ought to publish. I hold it a duty to publish it. There are other difficult duties which I am equal to, but I am not equal to that one. Yes, even I am dishonest. Not in many ways, but in some. Forty-one, I think it is. We are certainly *all* honest in one or several ways—every man in the world—though I have reason to think I am the only one whose black-list runs so light. Sometimes I feel lonely enough in this lofty solitude.



Yes, oh, yes, I am not overlooking the “steady progress from age to age of the coming of the kingdom of God and righteousness.” “From age to age”—yes, it describes that giddy gait. I (and the rocks) will not live to see it arrive, but that is all right—it will arrive, it surely will. But you ought not to be always ironically apologizing for the Deity. If that thing is going to arrive, it is inferable that He wants it to arrive; and so it is not quite kind of you, and it hurts me, to see you flinging sarcasms at the gait of it. And yet it would not be fair in me not to admit that the sarcasms are deserved. When the Deity wants a thing, and after working at it for “ages and ages” can’t show even a shade of progress toward its accomplishment, we—well, we don’t laugh, but it is only because we dasn’t. The source of “righteousness”—is in the heart? Yes. And engineered and directed by the brain? Yes. Well, history and tradition testify that the heart is just about what it was in the beginning; it has undergone no shade of change. Its good and evil impulses and their consequences are the same to-day that they were in Old Bible times, in Egyptian times, in Greek times, in Middle Age times, in Twentieth Century times. There has been no change.

Meantime, the brain has undergone no change. It is what it always was. There are a few good brains and a multitude of poor ones. It was so in Old Bible times and in all other times—Greek, Roman, Middle Ages and Twentieth Century. Among the savages—all the savages—the average brain is as competent as the average brain here or elsewhere. I will prove it to you, some time, if you like. And there are great brains among them, too. I will prove that also, if you like.

Well, the 19th century made progress—the first progress after “ages and ages”—colossal progress. In what? Materialities. Prodigious acquisitions were made in things which add to the comfort of many and make life harder for as many more. But the addition to

righteousness? Is that discoverable. I think not. The materialities were not invented in the interest of righteousness; that there is more righteousness in the world because of them than there was before, is hardly demonstrable, I think. In Europe and America there is a vast change (due to them) in ideals—do you admire it? All Europe and all America are feverishly scrambling for money. Money is the supreme ideal—all others take tenth place with the great bulk of the nations named. Money-lust has always existed, but not in the history of the world was it ever a craze, a madness, until your time and mine. This lust has rotted these nations; it has made them hard, sordid, ungentle, dishonest, oppressive.

Did England rise against the infamy of the Boer war? No—rose in favor of it. Did America rise against the infamy of the Philippine war? No—rose in favor of it. Did Russia rise against the infamy of the present war? No—sat still and said nothing. Has the Kingdom of God advanced in Russia since the beginning of time?

Or in Europe and America, considering the vast backward step of the money-lust? Or anywhere else? If there has been any progress toward righteousness since the early days of Creation—which, in my ineradicable honesty, I am obliged to doubt—I think we must confine it to ten per cent of the populations of Christendom, (but leaving Russia, Spain and South America entirely out.) This gives us 320,000,000 to draw the ten per cent from. That is to say, 32,000,000 have advanced toward righteousness and the Kingdom of God since the “ages and ages” have been flying along, the Deity sitting up there admiring. Well, you see it leaves 1,200,000,000 out of the race. They stand just where they have always stood; there has been no change.

N.B. No charge for these informations. Do come down soon, Joe.

With love,

MARK.

*To St. Clair McKelway, in Brooklyn :*

21 Fifth Ave.      Sunday Morning.  
April 30, 1905.

DEAR MCKELWAY,—Your innumerable friends are grateful, most grateful.

As I understand the telegrams, the engineer of your train had never seen a locomotive before. Very well, then, I am once more glad that there is an Ever-watchful Providence to foresee possible results and send Ogdens and McIntyres along to save our friends.

The Government's Official report, showing that our railways killed twelve hundred persons last year and injured sixty thousand convinces me that under present conditions one Providence is not enough to properly and efficiently take care of our railroad business. But it is characteristically American—always trying to get along short-handed and save wages.

I am helping your family congratulate themselves, and am your friend as always.

S. L. CLEMENS.

Clemens did not spend any more summers at Quarry Farm. All its associations were beautiful and tender, but they could only sadden him. The life there had been as of another world, sunlit, idyllic, now forever vanished. For the summer of 1905 he leased the Copley Green house at Dublin, New Hampshire, where there was a Boston colony of writing and artistic folk, including many of his long-time friends.

Clemens found that the air of the New Hampshire hills agreed with him and stimulated him to work. He began an entirely new version of *The Mysterious Stranger*, of which he already had a bulky and nearly finished manuscript, written in Vienna. He wrote several hundred pages of an extravaganza entitled, *Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes*, and then, having got his superabundant vitality reduced (it was likely to expend itself in these weird mental exploits), he settled down one day and wrote that really tender and beautiful idyl, *Eve's Diary*, which he had begun, or at least planned, the previous summer at Tyringham. In a letter to Mr. Frederick A. Duneka, general manager of Harper & Brothers, he tells something of the manner of the story ; also his revised opinion of *Adam's Diary*, written

in '93, and originally published as a souvenir of Niagara Falls.

*To Frederick A. Duneka, in New York :*

Dublin, July 16, '05.

DEAR MR. DUNEKA,—I wrote Eve's Diary, she using Adam's Diary as her (unwitting and unconscious) text, of course, since to use any other text would have been an imbecility—then I took Adam's Diary and *read* it. It turned my stomach. It was not literature; yet it had *been* literature once—before I sold it to be degraded to an advertisement of the Buffalo Fair. I was going to write and ask you to melt the plates and put it out of print.

But this morning I examined it without temper, and saw that if I abolished the advertisement it would be literature again.

So I have done it. I have struck out 700 words and inserted 5 MS pages of new matter (650 words), and now Adam's Diary is *dam* good—sixty times as good as it ever was before.

I believe it is as good as Eve's Diary now—no, it's not quite that good, I guess, but it is good enough to go in the same cover with Eve's. I'm sure of that.

I hate to have the old Adam go out any more—*don't* put it on the presses again, let's put the new one in place of it; and next Xmas, let us bind Adam and Eve in one cover. They score points against each other—so, if not bound together, some of the points would not be perceived. . . . P. S. Please send another Adam's Diary, so that I can make 2 revised copies. Eve's Diary is Eve's Love-Story, but we will not name it that. Yrs ever, MARK.

*To Frederick A. Duneka, in New York :*

Oct. 2, '05.

DEAR MR. DUNEKA,—I have just finished a short story which I "greatly admire," and so will you—"A Horse's

Tale"—about 15,000 words, at a rough guess. It has good fun in it, and several characters, and is lively. I shall finish revising it in a few days or more, then Jean will type it.

Don't you think you can get it into the Jan. and Feb. numbers and issue it as a dollar booklet just after the middle of Jan. when you issue the Feb. number?

It ought to be ably illustrated.

Why not sell simultaneous rights, for this once, to the Ladies' Home Journal or Collier's, or both, and recoup yourself?—for I would like to get it to classes that can't afford Harper's. Although it doesn't preach, there's a sermon concealed in it.

Yr sincerely,

MARK.

Five days later he added some rather interesting facts concerning the new story.

*To F. A. Duneka, in New York :*

Oct. 7, 1906.

DEAR MR. DUNEKA,—. . . I've made a poor guess as to number of words. I think there must be 20,000. My usual page of MS. contains about 130 words; but when I am deeply interested in my work and dead to everything else, my hand-writing shrinks and shrinks until there's a great deal more than 130 on a page,—oh yes, a deal more. Well, I discover, this morning, that this tale is written in that small hand.

This strong interest is natural, for the heroine is my daughter, Susy, whom we lost. It was not intentional—it was a good while before I found it out.

So I am sending you her picture to use—and to reproduce with photographic exactness the unsurpassable *expression* and all. May you find an artist who has lost an idol!

Take as good care of the picture as you can and restore it to me when I come.

I hope you will illustrate this tale considerably. Not humorous pictures. No. When they are good (or bad) one's humor gets no chance to play surprises on the reader. A humorous *subject* illustrated *seriously* is all right, but a *humorous artist* is no fit person for such work. You see, the humorous writer pretends to absolute seriousness (when he knows his trade) then for an artist to step in and give his calculated gravity all away with a funny picture—oh, my land! It gives me the dry gripes just to think of it. It would be just about up to the average comic artist's intellectual level to make a *funny* picture of the horse kicking the lungs out of a trader. Hang it, the *remark* is funny—*because* the horse is not *aware* of it—but the *fact* is not humorous, it is *tragic* and it is no subject for a humorous picture.

Could I be allowed to sit in judgment upon the pictures before they are accepted—at least those in which Cathy may figure?

This is not *essential*. It is but a suggestion, and it is hereby withdrawn, if it would be troublesome or cause delay.

I hope you will reproduce the cat-pile, full page. And save the photo for me in as good condition as possible. When Susy and Clara were little tots those cats had their profoundest worship, and there is no duplicate of this picture. These cats all had thundering names, or inappropriate ones—furnished by the children with my help. One was named Buffalo Bill.

Are you interested in coincidences?

After discovering, about the middle of the book, that Cathy was Susy Clemens, I put her picture with my MS., to be reproduced. After the book was *finished* it was discovered that Susy had a dim model of *Soldier Boy* in her arms; I had forgotten all about that toy.

Then I examined the cat-picture and laid *it* with the

MS. for introduction; but it was not until yesterday that I remembered that one of the cats was named *Buffalo Bill*.

Sincerely yours,  
MARK.

There was always a run of reporters at Mark Twain's New York home. When it was learned that he was to spend the summer in New Hampshire, the reporters had all wanted to find out about it. As they frequently applied to his publishers for these details it was finally suggested to him that he write a letter furnishing the required information.

*Mem. for Mr. Duneka :*

Dublin, Oct. 9, 1905.

. . . As to the other matters, here are the details.

Yes, I have tried a number of summer homes, here and in Europe together.

Each of these homes had charms of its own; charms and delights of its own, and some of them—even in Europe—had comforts. Several of them had conveniences, too. They all had a "view."

It is my conviction that there should always be some water in a view—a lake or a river, but not the ocean, if you are down on its level. I think that when you are down on its level it seldom inflames you with an ecstasy which you could not get out of a sand-flat. It is like being on board ship, over again; indeed it is worse than that, for there's three months of it. On board ship one tires of the aspects in a couple of days, and quits looking. The same vast circle of heaving humps is spread around you all the time, with you in the centre of it and never gaining an inch on the horizon, so far as you can see; for variety, a flight of flying-fish, mornings; a flock of porpoises throwing summersaults afternoons; a remote whale spouting, Sundays; occasional phosphorescent effects, nights; every other day a streak of black smoke

trailing along under the horizon; on the one single red letter day, the illustrious iceberg. I have seen that iceberg thirty-four times in thirty-seven voyages; it is always the same shape, it is always the same size, it always throws up the same old flash when the sun strikes it; you may set it on any New York door-step of a June morning and light it up with a mirror-flash; and I will engage to recognize it. It is artificial, and it is provided and anchored out by the steamer companies. I used to like the sea, but I was young then, and could easily get excited over any kind of monotony, and keep it up till the monotones ran out, if it was a fortnight.

Last January, when we were beginning to inquire about a home for this summer, I remembered that Abbott Thayer had said, three years before, that the New Hampshire Highlands was a good place. He was right—it was a good place. Any place that is good for an artist in paint is good for an artist in morals and ink. Brush is here, too; so is Col. T. W. Higginson; so is Raphael Pumpelly; so is Mr. Secretary Hitchcock; so is Henderson; so is Learned; so is Sumner; so is Franklin MacVeigh; so is Joseph L. Smith; so is Henry Copley Greene, when I am not occupying his house, which I am doing this season. Paint, literature, science, statesmanship, history, professorship, law, morals,—these are all represented here, yet crime is substantially unknown.

The summer homes of these refugees are sprinkled, a mile apart, among the forest-clad hills, with access to each other by firm smooth country roads which are so embowered in dense foliage that it is always twilight in there, and comfortable. The forests are spider-webbed with these good roads, they go everywhere; but for the help of the guide-boards, the stranger would not arrive anywhere.

The village—Dublin—is bunched together in its own place, but a good telephone service makes its markets handy to all those outliars. I have spelt it that way to



be witty. The village executes orders on the Boston plan—promptness and courtesy.

The summer homes are high-perched, as a rule, and have contenting outlooks. The house we occupy has one. Monadnock, a soaring double hump, rises into the sky at its left elbow—that is to say, it is close at hand. From the base of the long slant of the mountain the valley spreads away to the circling frame of the hills, and beyond the frame the billowy sweep of remote great ranges rises to view and flows, fold upon fold, wave upon wave, soft and blue and unworldly, to the horizon fifty miles away. In these October days Monadnock and the valley and its framing hills make an inspiring picture to look at, for they are sumptuously splashed and mottled and be-torched from sky-line to sky-line with the richest dyes the autumn can furnish; and when they lie flaming in the full drench of the mid-afternoon sun, the sight affects the spectator physically, it stirs his blood like military music.

These summer homes are commodious, well built,—and well furnished—facts which sufficiently indicate that the owners built them to live in themselves. They have furnaces and wood fireplaces, and the rest of the comforts and conveniences of a city home, and can be comfortably occupied all the year round.

We cannot have this house next season, but I have secured Mrs. Upton's house which is over in the law and science quarter, two or three miles from here, and about the same distance from the art, literary, and scholastic groups. The science and law quarter has needed improving, this good while.

The nearest railway-station is distant something like an hour's drive; it is three hours from there to Boston, over a branch line. You can go to New York in six hours per branch lines if you change cars every time you think of it, but it is better to go to Boston and stop over and take the trunk line next day, then you do not get lost.

It is claimed that the atmosphere of the New Hampshire highlands is exceptionally bracing and stimulating, and a fine aid to hard and continuous work. It is a just claim, I think. I came in May, and wrought 35 successive days without a break. It is possible that I could not have done it elsewhere. I do not know; I have not had any disposition to try it, before. I think I got the disposition out of the atmosphere, this time. I feel quite sure, in fact, that that is where it came from.

I am ashamed to confess what an intolerable pile of manuscript I ground out in the 35 days, therefore I will keep the number of words to myself. I wrote the first half of a long tale—"The Adventures of a Microbe"—and put it away for a finish next summer, and started another long tale—"The Mysterious Stranger;" I wrote the first half of it and put it with the other for a finish next summer. I stopped, then. I was not tired, but I had no books on hand that needed finishing this year except one that was seven years old. After a little I took that one up and finished it. Not for publication, but to have it ready for revision next summer.

Since I stopped work I have had a two months' holiday. The summer has been my working time for 35 years; to have a holiday in it (in America) is new for me. I have not broken it, except to write "Eve's Diary" and "A Horse's Tale"—short things occupying the mill 12 days.

This year our summer is 6 months long and ends with November and the flight home to New York, but next year we hope and expect to stretch it another month and end it the first of December.

[No signature.]

The fact that he was a persistent smoker was widely known, and many friends and admirers of Mark Twain sent him cigars, most of which he could not use, because they were *too good*. He did not care for Havana cigars, but smoked the fragrant, inexpensive domestic tobacco with plenty of "pep" in it, as we

say to-day. Now and then he had an opportunity to head off some liberal friend, who wrote asking permission to contribute to his cigar collection, as instance the following.

*To Rev. L. M. Powers, in Haverhill, Mass. :*

Nov. 9, 1905.

DEAR MR. POWERS,—I should accept your hospitable offer at once but for the fact I couldn't do it and remain honest. That is to say if I allowed you to send me what you believe to be good cigars it would distinctly mean that I meant to smoke them, whereas I should do nothing of the kind. I know a good cigar better than you do, for I have had 60 years experience.

No, that is not what I mean; I mean I know a bad cigar better than anybody else; I judge by the price only; if it costs above 5 cents I know it to be either foreign or half-foreign, and unsmokeable. By me. I have many boxes of Havana cigars, of all prices from 20 cts apiece up to 1.66 apiece; I bought none of them, they were all presents, they are an accumulation of several years. I have never smoked one of them and never shall, I work them off on the visitor. You shall have a chance when you come.

Pessimists are born not made; optimists are born not made; but no man is born either pessimist wholly or optimist wholly, perhaps; he is pessimistic along certain lines and optimistic along certain others. That is my case.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

In spite of all the fine photographs that were made of him, there recurred constantly among those sent him to be autographed a print of one which, years before, Sarony had made and placed on public sale. It was a good photograph, mechanically and even artistically, but it did not please Mark Twain. Whenever he saw it he recalled Sarony with bitterness and severity. Once he received an inquiry concerning it, and thus feelingly expressed himself.

*To Mr. Row (no address) :*

21 Fifth Avenue, New York,  
November 14, 1905.

DEAR MR. ROW,—That alleged portrait has a private history. Sarony was as much of an enthusiast about wild animals as he was about photography; and when Du Chaillu brought the first Gorilla to this country in 1819 he came to me in a fever of excitement and asked me if my father was of record and authentic. I said he was; then Sarony, without any abatement of his excitement asked if my grandfather also was of record and authentic. I said he was. Then Sarony, with still rising excitement and with joy added to it, said he had found my great grandfather in the person of the gorilla and had recognized him at once by his resemblance to me. I was deeply hurt but did not reveal this, because I knew Sarony meant no offense, for the gorilla had not done him any harm, and he was not a man who would say an unkind thing about a gorilla wantonly. I went with him to inspect the ancestor, and examined him from several points of view, without being able to detect anything more than a passing resemblance. "Wait," said Sarony with strong confidence, "let me show you." He borrowed my overcoat and put it on the gorilla. The result was surprising. I saw that the gorilla while not looking distinctly like me was exactly what my great grandfather would have looked like if I had had one. Sarony photographed the creature in that overcoat, and spread the picture about the world. It has remained spread about the world ever since. It turns up every week in some newspaper somewhere or other. It is not my favorite, but to my exasperation it is everybody else's. Do you think you could get it suppressed for me? I will pay the limit.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Though he used very little liquor of any kind, it was Mark Twain's custom to keep a bottle of Scotch whisky with his collection of pipes and cigars and tobacco on a little table by his bed-side. During restless nights he found a small quantity of it conducive to sleep. Andrew Carnegie, learning of this custom, made it his business to supply Scotch of his own special importation. The first case came direct from Scotland. When it arrived Clemens sent this characteristic acknowledgment.

*To Andrew Carnegie, in Scotland :*

21 Fifth Ave. Feb. 10, '06.

DEAR ST. ANDREW,—The whisky arrived in due course from over the water ; last week one bottle of it was extracted from the wood and inserted into me, on the instalment plan, with this result : that I believe it to be the best, smoothest whisky now on the planet. Thanks, oh, thanks : I have discarded Peruna.

Hoping that you three are well and happy and will be coming back before the winter sets in.

I am,

Sincerely yours,

MARK.

There came another summer at Dublin, New Hampshire, this time in the fine Upton residence on the other slope of Monadnock, a place of equally beautiful surroundings, and an even more extended view. Clemens was at this time working steadily on his so-called *Autobiography*, which was not that, in fact, but a series of remarkable chapters, reminiscent, reflective, commentative, written without any particular sequence as to time or subject-matter. He dictated these chapters to a stenographer, usually in the open air, sitting in a comfortable rocker or pacing up and down the long veranda that faced a vast expanse of wooded slope and lake and distant blue mountains. It became one of the happiest occupations of his later years.

*To W. D. Howells, in Maine :*

Dublin, Sunday, June 17, '06.

DEAR HOWELLS,— . . . The dictating goes lazily and pleasantly on. With intervals. I find that I have been

at it, off and on, nearly two hours a day for 155 days, since Jan. 9. To be exact I've dictated 75 hours in 80 days and loafed 75 days. I've added 60,000 words in the month that I've been here; which indicates that I've dictated during 20 days of that time—40 hours, at an average of 1,500 words an hour. It's a plenty, and I am satisfied.

There's a good deal of "fat" I've dictated, (from Jan. 9) 210,000 words, and the "fat" adds about 50,000 more.

The "fat" is old pigeon-holed things, of the years gone by, which I or editors didn't ~~didn't~~ to print. For instance, I am dumping in the little old book which I read to you in Hartford about 30 years ago and which you said "publish—and ask Dean Stanley to furnish an introduction; he'll do it." ("Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven.") It reads quite to suit me, without altering a word, now that it isn't to see print until I am dead.

To-morrow I mean to dictate a chapter which will get my heirs and assigns burnt alive if they venture to print it this side of 2006 A.D.—which I judge they won't. There'll be lots of such chapters if I live 3 or 4 years longer. The edition of A.D. 2006 will make a stir when it comes out. I shall be hovering around taking notice, along with other dead pals. You are invited. MARK.

Henry Mills Alden, for nearly forty years editor of *Harper's Magazine*, arrived at his seventieth birthday on November 11th that year, and Harper & Brothers had arranged to give him a great dinner in the offices of Franklin Square, where, for half a century, he had been an active force. Mark Twain, threatened with a cold, and knowing the dinner would be strenuous, did not feel able to attend, so wrote a letter which, if found suitable, could be read at the gathering.

*To Mr. Henry Alden :*

ALDEN,—dear and ancient friend—it is a solemn moment. You have now reached the age of discretion. You have been a long time arriving. Many years ago you docked me on an article because the subject was

too old ; later, you docked me on an article because the subject was too new ; later still, you docked me on an article because the subject was betwixt and between. Once, when I wrote a Letter to Queen Victoria, you did not put it in the respectable part of the Magazine, but interred it in that potter's field, the Editor's Drawer. As a result, she never answered it. How often we recall, with regret, that Napoleon once shot at a magazine editor and missed him and killed a publisher. But we remember, with charity, that his intentions were good.

You will reform, now, Alden. You will cease from these economies, and you will be discharged. But in your retirement you will carry with you the admiration and earnest good wishes of the oppressed and toiling scribes. This will be better than bread. Let this console you when the bread fails.

You will carry with you another thing, too—the affection of the scribes ; for they all love you in spite of your crimes. For you bear a kind heart in your breast, and the sweet and winning spirit that charms away all hostilities and animosities, and makes of your enemy your friend and keeps him so. You have reigned over us thirty-six years, and, please God, you shall reign another thirty-six—"and peace to Mahmoud on his golden throne ! "

Always yours

MARK.

Mark Twain's own books were always being excommunicated by some librarian, and the matter never failed to invite the attention and amusement of the press, and the indignation of many correspondents. Usually the books were *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn*, the morals of which were not regarded as wholly exemplary. But in 1907 a small library, in a very small town, attained a day's national notoriety by putting the ban on *Eve's Diary*, not so much on account of its text as for the chaste and exquisite illustrations by Lester Ralph. When the reporters came in a troop to learn about it, the author said : " I believe this time the trouble is mainly with the pictures. I did not draw them. I wish I had—they are so beautiful."

Just at this time, Dr. William Lyon Phelps, of Yale, was giving a literary talk to the Teachers' Club, of Hartford, dwelling on the superlative value of Mark Twain's writings for readers old and young. Mrs. F. G. Whitmore, an old Hartford friend, wrote Clemens of the things that Phelps had said, as consolation for Eve's latest banishment. This gave him a chance to add something to what he had said to the reporters.

*To Mrs. Whitmore, in Hartford :*

Feb. 7, 1907.

DEAR MRS. WHITMORE,—But the truth is, that when a Library expels a book of mine and leave an unexpurgated Bible lying around where unprotected youth and age can get hold of it, the deep unconscious irony of it delights me and doesn't anger me. But even if it angered me such words as those of Professor Phelps would take the sting all out. Nobody attaches weight to the freaks of the Charlton Library, but when a man like Phelps speaks, the world gives attention. Some day I hope to meet him and thank him for his courage for saying those things out in public. Custom is, to think a handsome thing in private but tame it down in the utterance.

I hope you are all well and happy ; and thereto I add my love.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

In May, 1907, Mark Twain was invited to England to receive from Oxford the degree of Literary Doctor. It was an honour that came to him as a sort of laurel crown at the end of a great career, and gratified him exceedingly.

Mark Twain's extraordinary reception and triumph in England was, in fact, the crowning glory of his career. Perhaps one of the most satisfactory incidents of his sojourn was a dinner given to him by the staff of *Punch*, in the historic offices at 10 Bouverie Street, where no other foreign visitor had been thus honoured—a notable distinction. When the dinner ended, little Joy Agnew, daughter of the chief editor, entered and presented to the chief guest the original drawing of a cartoon by Bernard Partridge, which had appeared on the front page



of *Punch*. In this picture the presiding genius of the paper is offering to Mark Twain health, long life, and happiness from "*The Punch Bowl*."

*To Miss Joy Agnew, in London :*

Tuxedo Park, New York.

Unto you greetings and salutation and worship, you dear, sweet little rightly-named Joy ! I can see you now almost as vividly as I saw you that night when you sat flashing and beaming upon those sombre swallow-tails.

"Fair as a star when only one  
Is shining in the sky."

Oh, you were indeed the only one—there wasn't even the remotest chance of competition with *you*, dear ! Ah, *you* are a decoration, you little witch !

The idea of your house going to the wanton expense of a flower garden !—aren't you enough ? And what do you want to go and discourage the other flowers for ? Is that the right spirit ? is it considerate ? is it kind ? How do you suppose they feel when you come around—looking the way *you* look ? And you so pink and sweet and dainty and lovely and supernatural ? Why, it makes them feel embarrassed and artificial, of course ; and in my opinion it is just as pathetic as it can be. Now then you want to reform—dear—and do right.

Well certainly you are well off, Joy :

3 bantams ;

3 goldfish ;

3 doves ;

6 canaries ;

2 dogs ;

1 cat ;

All you need, now, to be permanently beyond the reach of want, is one more dog—just one more good, gentle, high-principled, affectionate, loyal dog who wouldn't want any nobler service than the golden privilege of

lying at your door, nights, and biting everything that came along—and I am that very one, and ready to come at the dropping of a hat.

Do you think you could convey my love and thanks to your “daddy” and Owen Seaman and those other oppressed and down-trodden subjects of yours, you darling small tyrant?

On my knees! These—with the kiss of fealty from your other subject—

MARK TWAIN.

Clemens could never accustom himself to the loss of his wife. From the time of her death, marriage—which had brought him his greatest joy in life—presented itself to him always with the thought of bereavement, waiting somewhere just behind. The news of an approaching wedding saddened him and there was nearly always a sombre tinge in his congratulations, of which the following to a dear friend is an example:

*To Father Fitz-Simon, in Washington :*

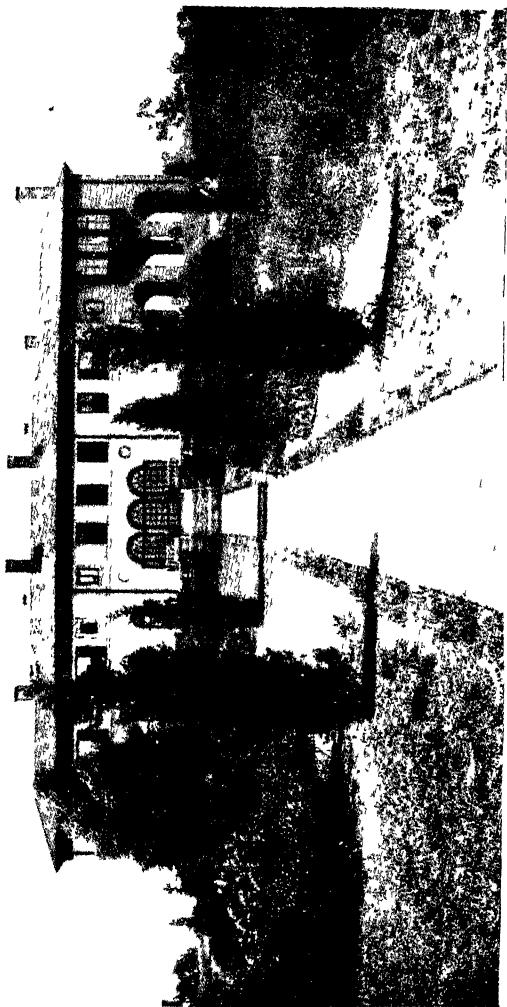
June 5, '08.

DEAR FATHER FITZ-SIMON,—Marriage—yes, it *is* the supreme felicity of life, I concede it. And it is also the supreme tragedy of life. The deeper the love the surer the tragedy. And the more disconsolating when it comes.

And so I congratulate you. Not perfunctorily, not lukewarmly, but with a fervency and fire that no word in the dictionary is strong enough to convey. And in the same breath and with the same depth and sincerity, I grieve for you. Not for both of you and not for the one that shall go first, but for the one that is fated to be left behind. For that one there is no recompense—For that one no recompense is possible.

There are times—thousands of times—when I can expose the half of my mind, and conceal the other half, but in the matter of the tragedy of marriage I feel too deeply for that, and I have to bleed it all out or shut it all

STORMFIELD





in. And so you must consider what I have been through, and am passing through and be charitable with me.

Make the most of the sunshine ! and I hope it will last long—ever so long.

I do not really want to be present ; yet for friendship's sake and because I honor you so, I would be there if I could.

Most sincerely your friend,

S. L. CLEMENS.

The new home at Redding was completed in the spring of 1908, and on the 18th of June, when it was entirely fitted and furnished, Mark Twain entered it for the first time. He had never even seen the place nor carefully examined plans which John Howells had made for his house. He preferred the surprise of it, and the general avoidance of detail. That he was satisfied with the result will be seen in his letters. He named it at first "Innocence at Home" ; later changing this title to "Stormfield."

In his philosophy, *What Is Man ?* and now and again in his other writings, we find Mark Twain giving small credit to the human mind as an originator of ideas. The most original writer of his time, he took no credit for pure invention and allowed none to others. The mind, he declared, adapted, consciously or unconsciously ; it did not create. In a letter which follows he elucidates this doctrine. The reference in it to the "captain" and to the kerosene points to Captain "Hurricane" Jones and his theory of the miracles of "Isaac and of the prophets of Baal," as expounded in *Some Rambling Notes of an Idle Excursion*.

By a trick of memory Clemens gives *The Little Duke* as his suggestion for *The Prince and the Pauper* ; he should have written *The Prince and the Page*, by the same author.

To Rev. F. V. Christ, in New York.

Redding, Conn., Aug. '08.

DEAR SIR,—You say "I often owe my best sermons to a suggestion received in reading or from other exterior sources." Your remark is not quite in accordance with the facts. We must change it to—"I owe *all* my thoughts, sermons and ideas to suggestions received from sources outside of myself." The simplified English of this proposi-

tion is—"No man's brains ever originated an idea." It is an astonishing thing that after all these ages the world goes on thinking the human brain machinery can originate a thought.

It can't. It never has done it. In all cases, little and big, the thought is born of a suggestion; and in *all* cases the suggestions come to the brain from the outside. The brain never acts except from exterior impulse.

A man can satisfy himself of the truth of this by a single process,—let him examine every idea that occurs to him in an hour; a day; in a week—in a lifetime if he please. He will always find that an outside something suggested the thought, something which he saw with his eyes or heard with his ears or perceived by his touch—not necessarily to-day, nor yesterday, nor last year, nor twenty years ago, but *sometime* or *other*. Usually the source of the suggestion is immediately traceable, but sometimes it isn't.

However, if you will examine every thought that occurs to you for the next two days, you will find that in at least nine cases out of ten you can put your finger on the outside suggestion—And that ought to convince you that No. 10 had that source too, although you cannot at present hunt it down and find it.

The idea of writing to me would have had to wait a long time if it waited until your brain *originated* it. It was born of an outside suggestion—Sir Thomas and my old Captain.

The hypnotist thinks he has invented a new thing—*suggestion*. This is very sad. I don't know where my captain got his kerosene idea. (It was forty-one years ago, and he is long ago dead.) But I know that it didn't originate in his head, but it was born from a suggestion from the outside.

Yesterday a guest said, "How did you come to think of writing 'The Prince and the Pauper'?" I didn't. The thought came to me from the outside—suggested by that

pleasant and picturesque little history-book, Charlotte M. Yonge’s “Little Duke.” I doubt if Mrs. Burnett knows whence came to her the suggestion to write “Little Lord Fauntleroy,” but I know; it came to her from reading “The Prince and the Pauper.” In all my life I have never originated an idea, and neither has she, nor anybody else.

Man’s mind is a clever machine, and can work up materials into ingenious fancies and ideas, but it can’t create the material; none but the gods can do that. In Sweden I saw a vast machine receive a block of wood, and turn it into marketable matches in two minutes. It could do everything but make the wood. That is the kind of machine the human mind is. Maybe this is not a large compliment, but it is all I can afford. . . .

Your friend and well-wisher.

S. L. CLEMENS.

The “Children’s Theatre” of the next letter was an institution of the New York East Side in which Mark Twain was deeply interested. The children were most, if not all, of Hebrew parentage, and the performances they gave, under the direction of Alice M. Herts, were really remarkable.

The following letter was in reply to one enclosing a newspaper clipping reporting a performance of *The Prince and the Pauper*, given by Chicago school children.

*To Mrs. Hookway, in Chicago :*

Sept., 1908.

DEAR MRS. HOOKWAY,—Although I am full of the spirit of work this morning, a rarity with me lately—I must steal a moment or two for a word in person: for I have been reading the eloquent account in the *Record-Herald* and am pleasurably stirred, to my deepest deeps. The reading brings vividly back to me my pet and pride. The Children’s Theatre of the East side, New York. And it supports and re-affirms what I have so often and strenuously said in public that a children’s theatre is easily the most valuable adjunct that any educational

institution for the young can have, and that no otherwise good school is complete without it.

It is much the most effective teacher of morals and promoter of good conduct that the ingenuity of man has yet devised, for the reason that its lessons are not taught wearily by book and by dreary homily, but by visible and 'enthusing action; and they go straight to the heart, which is the rightest of right places for them. Book morals often get no further than the intellect, if they even get that far on their spectral and shadowy pilgrimage: but when they travel from a Children's Theatre they do not stop permanently at that halfway house, but go on home.

The children's theatre is the only teacher of morals and conduct and high ideals that never bores the pupil, but always leaves him sorry when the lesson is over. And as for history, no other teacher is for a moment comparable to it: no other can make the dead heroes of the world rise up and shake the dust of the ages from their bones and live and move and breathe and speak and be real to the looker and listener: no other can make the study of the lives and times of the illustrious dead a delight, a splendid interest, a passion; and no other can paint a history-lesson in colors that will stay, and stay, and never fade.

It is my conviction that the children's theatre is one of the very, very great inventions of the twentieth century; and that its vast educational value—now but dimly perceived and but vaguely understood—will presently come to be recognized. By the article which I have been reading I find the same things happening in the Howland School that we have become familiar with in our Children's Theatre (of which I am President, and sufficiently vain of the distinction.) These things among others;

1. The educating history-study does not stop with the little players, but the whole school catches the infection and revels in it.

2. And it doesn't even stop there; the children carry



it home and infect the family with it—even the parents and grandparents ; and the whole household fall to studying history, and bygone manners and customs and costumes with eager interest. And this interest is carried along to the studying of costumes in old book-plates ; and beyond that to the selecting of fabrics and the making of clothes. Hundreds of our children learn the plays by listening without book, and by making notes ; then the listener goes home and plays the piece—all the parts !—to the family. And the family are glad and proud ; glad to listen to the explanations and analyses, glad to learn, glad to be lifted to planes above their dreary workaday lives. Our children's theatre is educating 7,000 children—and their families. When we put on a play of Shakespeare they fall to studying it diligently ; so that they may be qualified to enjoy it to the limit when the piece is staged.

3. Your Howland School children do the construction-work, stage-decorations, etc. That is our way too. Our young folks do everything that is needed by the theatre, with their own hands ; scene-designing, scene-painting, gas-fitting, electric work, costume-designing—costume-making, everything and all things indeed—and their orchestra and its leader are from their own ranks. . . .

One of Mark Twain's friends was Henniker-Heaton, the so-called "Father of Penny Postage" between England and America. When, after long years of effort, he succeeded in getting the rate established, he at once bent his energies in the direction of cheap cable service and a letter from him came one day to Stormfield concerning his new plans. This letter happened to be over-weight, which gave Mark Twain a chance for some amusing exaggerations at his expense.

*To Henniker-Heaton, in London :*

Stormfield, Redding, Connecticut,  
Jan. 18, 1909.

DEAR HENNIKER-HEATON,—I do hope you will succeed to your heart's desire in your cheap-cablegram campaign,

and I feel sure you will. Indeed your cheap-postage victory, achieved in spite of a quarter-century of determined opposition, is good and rational prophecy that you will. Wireless, not being as yet imprisoned in a Chinese wall of private cash and high-placed and formidable influence, will come to your aid and make your new campaign briefer and easier than the other one was.

Now then, after uttering my serious word, am I privileged to be frivolous for a moment? When you shall have achieved cheap telegraphy, are you going to employ it for just your own selfish profit and other people's pecuniary damage, the way you are doing with your cheap postage? You get letter-postage reduced to 2 cents an ounce, then you mail me a 4-ounce letter with a 2-cent stamp on it, and I have to pay the extra freight at this end of the line. I return your envelope for inspection. Look at it. Stamped in one place is a vast "T," and under it the figures "40;" and under those figures appears an "L," a sinister and suspicious and mysterious L. In another place, stamped within a circle, in offensively large capitals, you find the words "DUE 8 CENTS." Finally, in the midst of a desert space up nor-noreastard from that circle you find a figure "3" of quite unnecessarily aggressive and insolent magnitude—and done with a blue pencil, so as to be as conspicuous as possible. I inquired about these strange signs and symbols of the postman. He said they were P. O. Department signals for his instruction.

"Instruction for what?"

"To get extra postage."

"Is it so? Explain. Tell me about the large T and the 40."

"It's short for *Take* 40—or as we postmen say, grab 40."

"Go on, please, while I think up some words to swear with."

"Due 8 means, grab 8 more."

“———. Continue.”

“The blue-pencil 3 was an afterthought. There aren't any stamps for afterthoughts; the sums vary, according to inspiration, and they whirl in the one that suggests itself at the last moment. Sometimes they go severals times higher than this one. This one only means hog 3 cents more. And so if you've got 51 cents about you, or can borrow it—”

“Tell me: who gets this corruption?”

“Half of it goes to the man in England who ships the letter on short postage, and the other half goes to the P.O.D. to protect cheap postage from inaugurating a deficit.”

“——— !”

“I can't blame you; I would say it myself in your place, if these ladies were not present. But you see I'm only obeying orders, I can't help myself.”

“Oh, I know it; I'm not blaming you. Finally, what does that L stand for?”

“Get the money, or give him L. It's English, you know.”

“Take it and go. It's the last cent I've got in the world———.”

After seeing the Oxford pageant file by the grand stand, picture after picture, splendor after splendor, three thousand five hundred strong, the most moving and beautiful and impressive and historically-instructive show conceivable you are not to think I would miss the London pageant of next year, with its shining host of 15,000 historical English men and women dug from the misty books of all the vanished ages and marching in the light of the sun—all alive, and looking just as they were used to look! Mr. Lascelles spent yesterday here on the farm, and told me all about it. I shall be in the middle of my 75th year then, and interested in pageants for personal and prospective reasons.

I beg you to give my best thanks to the Bath Club for

the offer of its hospitalities, but I shall not be able to take advantage of it, because I am to be a guest in a private house during my stay in London. Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

It was in 1907 that Clemens had seen the Oxford Pageant—during the week when he had been awarded his doctor's degree. It gave him the greatest delight, and he fully expected to see the next one, planned for 1910.

Because Mark Twain amused himself with certain aspects of Christian Science, and was critical of Mrs. Eddy, there grew up a wide impression that he jeered at the theory of mental healing; when, as a matter of fact, he was one of its earliest converts, and never lost faith in its power.

*To J. Wylie Smith, Glasgow, Scotland :*

"Stormfield," August 7, 1909.

DEAR SIR,—My view of the matter has not changed. To wit, that Christian Science is valuable; that it has just the same value now that it had when Mrs. Eddy stole it from Quimby; that its healing principle (its most valuable asset) possesses the same force now that it possessed a million years ago before Quimby was born; that Mrs. Eddy . . . organized that force, and is entitled to high credit for that. Then, with a splendid sagacity she hitched it to . . . a religion, the surest of all ways to secure friends for it, and support. In a fine and lofty way—figuratively speaking—it was a tramp stealing a ride on the lightning express. Ah, how did that ignorant village-born peasant woman know the human being so well? She has no more intellect than a tadpole—until it comes to business—then she is a marvel!

Am I sorry I wrote the book? Most certainly not. You say you have 500 (converts) in Glasgow. Fifty years from now, your posterity will not count them by the hundred, but by the thousand. I feel absolutely sure of this.

Very truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Early in June that year, Clemens had developed unmistakable symptoms of heart trouble of a very serious nature. It was angina pectoris, and while to all appearances he was as well as ever and usually felt so, he was periodically visited by severe attacks of acute "breast pains" which, as the months passed, increased in frequency and severity. He was alarmed and distressed—not on his own account, but because of his daughter Jean—a handsome girl, who had long been subject to epileptic seizures. In case of his death he feared that Jean would be without permanent anchorage, his other daughter, Clara—following her marriage to Ossip Gabrilowitsch in October—having taken up residence abroad.

This anxiety was soon ended. On the morning of December 24th, Jean Clemens was found dead in her apartment. She was not drowned in her bath, as was reported, but died from heart exhaustion, the result of her malady and the shock of cold water.

The blow to her father was terrible, but heavy as it was, one may perhaps understand that her passing in that swift, painless way must have afforded him a measure of relief.

Mark Twain had returned from a month's trip to Bermuda a few days before Jean died. Now, by his physician's advice, he went back to those balmy islands. He had always loved them, since his first trip there with Twichell thirty-three years earlier, and at "Bay House," the residence of Vice-Consul Allen, where he was always a welcome guest, he could have the attentions and care and comforts of a home. Taking Claude, the butler, as his valet, he sailed January 5th, and presently sent back a letter in which he said, "Again I am leading the ideal life, and am immeasurably content."

From the early Bermuda letters we may gather that Mark Twain's days were enjoyable enough, and that his malady was not giving him serious trouble, thus far. Through February, and most of March, letters and reports from him were about the same. In these letters he seldom mentioned the angina pains that had tortured him earlier. But once, when he sent a small photograph of himself, it seemed to us that his face had become thin and that he had suffered. Yet we did not suspect how rapidly the end was approaching and only grew vaguely alarmed. A week later, however, it became evident that his condition was critical.

DEAR PAINE,—. . . I have been having a most uncomfortable time for the past 4 days with that breast-pain, which turns out to be an affection of the heart, just

as I originally suspected. The news from New York is to the effect that non-bronchial weather has arrived there at last, therefore if I can get my breast trouble in traveling condition I may sail for home a week or two earlier than has heretofore been proposed.

Yours as ever

S. L. CLEMENS,  
(per H. S. A.)

In this letter he seems to have forgotten that his trouble had been pronounced an affection of the heart long before he left America, though at first it had been thought that it might be gastritis. The same mail brought a letter from Mr. Allen explaining fully the seriousness of his condition. I sailed immediately for Bermuda, arriving there on the 4th of April. He was not suffering at the moment, though the pains came now with alarming frequency and violence. He was cheerful and brave. He did not complain. He gave no suggestion of a man whose days were nearly ended.

A part of the Stormfield estate had been a farm, which he had given to Jean Clemens, where she had busied herself raising some live stock and poultry. After her death he had wished the place to be sold and the returns devoted to some memorial purpose. The sale had been made during the winter and the price received had been paid in cash. I found him full of interest in all affairs, and anxious to discuss the memorial plan. A day or two later he dictated the following letter—the last he would ever send.

It seemed fitting that this final word from one who had so long given happiness to the whole world should record a special gift to his neighbours.

*To Charles T. Lark, in New York :*

Hamilton, Bermuda.  
April 6, 1910.

DEAR MR. LARK,—I have told Paine that I want the money derived from the sale of the farm, which I had given, but not conveyed, to my daughter Jean, to be used to erect a building for the Mark Twain Library of Redding, the building to be called the Jean L. Clemens Memorial Building.

I wish to place the money \$6,000.00 in the hands of

three trustees,—Paine and two others: H. A. Lounsbury and William E. Hazen, all of Redding, these trustees to form a building Committee to decide on the size and plan of the building needed and to arrange for and supervise the work in such a manner that the fund shall amply provide for the building complete, with necessary furnishings, leaving, if possible, a balance remaining, sufficient for such repairs and additional furnishings as may be required for two years from the time of completion.

Will you please draw a document covering these requirements and have it ready by the time I reach New York (April 14th).           Very sincerely,

S. L. CLEMENS.

We sailed on the 12th of April, reaching New York on the 14th, as he had planned. A day or two later, Mr. and Mrs. Gabrilowitsch, summoned from Italy by cable, arrived. He suffered very little after reaching Stormfield, and his mind was comparatively clear up to the last day. On the afternoon of April 21st he sank into a state of coma, and just at sunset he died. Three days later, at Elmira, New York, he was laid beside Mrs. Clemens and those others who had preceded him.





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